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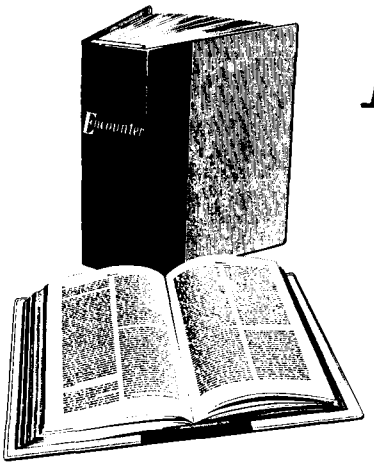

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Liu Xinwu

Every Green Leaf

EACH TIME spring is about to become summer, I generally take a close look at the trees with their thick trunks and luxuriant, well-spaced leaves and branches. I've noticed that you'll be hard put to it to find two leaves exactly alike on one tree. I often think, so long as they're leaves it doesn't matter what size they are or whether the shape is normal or even whether they're half worm-eaten; they're all carrying out photosynthesis and feeding the tree. Looking up at the millions of leaves above me, I feel an overwhelming tenderness for each and every one of them.

I'd like to introduce you to someone. Let's start from the end of last term when our teaching group was selecting model teachers. We were sixteen in the group so we could select five. And as people were quite forthcoming it didn't take long to short-list nine. I'm the leader of the teaching group and I was in charge of the selection meeting. When the noise of the selection was over, and the room had grown a bit calmer, I used a ballpoint pen to count the nominations which I'd jotted down. Suddenly I felt as if something were missing. Then I looked around the meeting—why hadn't anyone mentioned Wei Jinxing? Wei was at this time sitting in the corner. We're the same age—forty-two this year. He's tallish; always has a crew-cut; you could call him dark-skinned. His eyes are deeply sunk, and he has high cheekbones and thick lips—obviously a southerner. At this point his elbows were on the table, his fingers locked together. You could quite distinctly hear him cracking the joints. A thought occurred to me: Wei Jinxing had been teaching for twenty years and he taught extremely well. In the end-of-year exams, the top or second-top student of the whole year always came from one of the two classes he'd been teaching. He'd also published two pieces on his teaching experience in the journal *Mathematics for Middle Schools*. He shouldn't be left out of the selection.

"Any more suggestions?"

I looked over to where Wei was sitting by way of a hint. Mr Wu, the oldest in the group, seemed a little hesitant,

"I think Jinxing's quite good."

He gave a few reasons and proposed him as a model. But when he'd finished speaking, apart from myself, nobody backed him up. I was thinking of stirring them up again when Yu with the blunt nose sitting beside me tugged at my sleeve.

"Get a move on, we've all got plenty to do."

I brought the meeting to a close. Wei Jinxing was the first to leave the staff-room. He was carrying a big pile of exercise books, his head down and looking ill at ease. Seeing him like that I felt most uncomfortable. When almost everyone had gone I asked Yu, who normally I could discuss anything with,

"How come none of you suggested Wei Jinxing?"

Yu shrugged his shoulders:

"Him? He's a freak."

Wei is certainly strange. I remember we were sent to the Evergreen and Pine Street middle school in the same year. At that time the school's general office had a rule; we single teachers all had to live two to a room, but as soon as Wei Jinxing arrived he said to the authorities,

"I want to live on my own. The room can be half the size of theirs."

The head of the general office got furious.

"What? Special treatment? Not likely!"

But Zhou, the Party branch secretary, was broad-minded. She said,

"Haven't we got a small room? Let him

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have that. So long as he works hard and teaches well."

So Wei moved in.

AT THAT TIME, the ten of us graduates from different universities all lived at the school; in the evenings, we'd go to each other's rooms to get the lessons ready or just chat.

One evening I went to knock on Wei's door.

"Come in"—he seemed to trail his words.

I went in. The desk was piled with books, exercise books, and teaching material. Obviously he was just preparing a class. It seems funny when I say it but when I'd looked around his room, although it was so small, it gave me a feeling of emptiness. Apart from the bed, desk, bookshelf, and the stand for the hand-basin, there was only a small round stool not more than a foot wide, with steel legs. Wei was preparing the class sitting on that. Actually if there was one thing the school had plenty of, it was chairs with backs for the students, but he hadn't got himself one.

When Wei saw me come in he stood up and politely asked if he could help. I didn't want anything in particular—just to have a chat. Not finding a chair I went to sit on the bed. He tugged at my sleeve and pointed to the small stool.

"Sit there."

Unwillingly I sat down and only then looked more closely at the bed. It was covered with a snow-white sheet and not only was it spotless but there wasn't a wrinkle to be seen.

The funny part was he didn't sit on the bed himself, but stood "at ease" in front of me, his hands behind his back, a polite smile on his face. He seemed to be waiting for me to ask a question, to which he would give me a patient reply. I'd quite lost any urge to chat, so I raised some question that had cropped up in preparing the class.

He leant against the table and wrote while he spoke. I must admit he was most thorough and painstaking and it was quite helpful, but when he'd finished the explanation, he straightened up and fell silent. Of course I had to go.

A month after that, nobody went to knock on his door. They'd all encountered virtually the same "hospitality" as myself. Yu made fun of him and said we should put some stickers either side of the door saying NO TRESPASSERS and one above the door saying A FREAK LIVES HERE.

Evidently Wei taught better than us. When old teachers like Wu had listened to his classes they often praised him repeatedly in front of us. The students also pronounced him clear and easy to understand, someone who didn't waste words. Like the other teachers he gave the students special coaching and made a point of chatting to them. The only thing was, he never took them back to his room—the place he met them was either a classroom or the staff-room. In the summer it might simply be the playground or under a tree.

Wei Jinxing's small room gradually seemed to become shrouded in mystery. Soon a rumour sprang up that he had three drawers in his desk, and in one of them—you could say it was full, on the other hand you could say it was empty—in short it was very, very odd—at the bottom of the drawer was a photo about the same area as the drawer and the photo was of a girl's face—smiling! The source of the rumour was Yu. He himself said he was preparing his lessons one evening and he needed a book of exercises but Wei Jinxing was the only one who had a copy so he had to go and knock on his door. When Wei had readily lent him the exercise book, Wei picked up his thermos and made to get some hot water. He stepped back to let Yu through the door, waited a moment, then went off to the hot-water room. Yu went back to his room and hadn't even sat down before he discovered he'd lost his pen. He thought perhaps he'd left it on Wei Jinxing's table so he rushed back to look for it. Wei hadn't yet come back with his hot water. Yu didn't find his pen on the desk so without thinking he opened the drawer to look for it.... Of course, Yu eventually found it under his own desk but from that time on, the news quietly spread about Wei's big photo.

"I never would have imagined Wei Jinxing would get a girlfriend before us!" Yu would say, and even checked whether among the letters the postman left with the porter there were any addressed "Wei Jinxing—Personal" in beautiful handwriting. However, as time went by, Yu's excessive curiosity had nothing to feed on and fizzled out. Other single colleagues in our hostel got married one by one and moved out to set up home. Yu also got a girl-friend but Wei Jinxing stayed on by himself in the little eight-square-metre room.

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As one lesson bell followed another, the years and months passed quickly. And as the chalk dust rose and fell, day after day, the judgment that Wei was a freak became encrusted in our minds. But at work Wei Jinxing got on well with all of us. Hardly anything special happened to speak of.

APART FROM TEACHING, we had another kind of life—the so-called political life. Gradually this took up more and more time and became more and more important. I don't know when it started but it seemed teaching couldn't now be counted as "revolution." If we wanted to be revolutionary we had to spend a lot of time and energy holding political meetings, listening to other people speak, speaking ourselves, writing big character posters, exposing others, examining ourselves, purging 5% of our colleagues, preserving our own places within the 95%. . . . Gradually, Wei Jinxing's life became particularly difficult.

I remember it was in the summer of 1964. It was at the height of the "Revolutionary Peking Opera Sing-in." There was a rectification in the teachers' Communist Youth League branch. That year Wei and I were already twenty-eight; when we'd finished taking part in the rectification movement we were to withdraw from the Youth League, because of our age. When the rectification—which was a sort of sieving process—came to Wei Jinxing, Yu, who was at that time a League branch Propaganda Committee member and, under the influence of the times, mad keen to revolutionise everything, fired the first shot. This shot not only left Wei Jinxing ashen-faced but shocked everyone present.

"Comrade Wei Jinxing's attitudes are not in step with these fiery revolutionary times; let him confess to the comrades his darkest secrets!"

Everone fixed their eyes on Wei. I remember how that day he sat alone on the broken-down sofa in the meeting room, hunched up, silent for a full two minutes before clumsily explaining,

"I don't have any . . . unrevolutionary thoughts. Of course, I have failings . . . but, not secret. . . ."

Remembering now, it's really hard to explain; Yu's attack was obviously quite arbitrary, but not a soul stood up to break the tension. Even I, after several comrades had spoken in support of Yu, said excitedly,

"We must carry out the revolution in every way; block up all the paths to revisionism! I hope Comrade Wei won't again try to preserve his individualist world outside working hours."

The atmosphere of the meeting was earnest, almost as if the issue of whether or not China could avoid going revisionist hinged on whether Wei Jinxing could change his character.

The rectification movement was very successful. Some comrades were purged of their fondness for colourful language, humorous habits and characteristics (such habits were blown up as "bourgeois liberalism"); some comrades, under the pressure to become revolutionary, gave up playing *Weichi*, sold their guitars, stopped singing *Execution of the King's son-in-law* (this was praised as giving up private worlds in the ideological field). I too was rectified so that I became afraid of being accused of sympathy with "bourgeois sentimentality." So I spurred myself to look at everything in the light of "never for a moment neglecting class struggle." Even though we unavoidably still retained some unconventional characteristics, everyone conscientiously suppressed them, and tried to hide them as best they could. There were only two people who didn't change much; one was Yu. His extremism and love of struggle could be called exemplary, so he didn't need to change. The other was Wei Jinxing. Braving cold looks and misunderstanding, he worked as hard as ever and kept his old life-style.

THE SUMMER OF 1966 arrived. Everyone was suddenly cast into a raging whirlpool that made one dizzy. Not even Yu was exempt. Suddenly, big character posters written by "the young generals" in the most extreme language were stuck all over the school. Not only were they stuck on the walls, but also on the doors, rostra, blackboards, even the desks in the staff-room, on the chairs and on people's backs. At first, of course, Wei Jinxing wasn't the target of the purge, but—and I don't know if I should call it accidental or inevitable—he was very soon swept into the centre of the whirlpool.

That day, at the criticism struggle on the playground, it wasn't enough that the branch

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secretary, Zhou, had to wear a tall hat (with her "crimes" written on it), and a placard in front, she also had to have her head half-shaved in public. All of us teachers were crowded together at the front of the playground so that from time to time "supporters of the capitalist restorationists" could be dragged from our midst and taken on to the stage to be a second target. Everyone was uneasy and under the fierce heat of the sun, the hot and cold sweat mingled together. Yu sat beside me with his head down. Even his lips were white with fear—obviously he was suffering even more than us, because it had never occurred to him that he too could be classed on "the right."

The incident happened suddenly. Just as some "young generals" were forcing Zhou to be shaved, Wei Jinxing noiselessly left the seats for us teachers and, with head bowed, made to leave the meeting. Then a girl soldier in green army uniform, with red armband, holding a broad leather belt, her hair springing in two bunches from under her green army cap, shouted, "What are you doing?"

"I feel sick."

"Get back. The revolution doesn't fear death. You have to take part in struggle even when you feel sick!"

"I feel sick."

"You weren't sick before—how come you're sick now?"

"I feel sick."

"If you're a revolutionary, get back. If not, look out!"

"I feel sick."

"What evil thoughts are you harbouring? Is Zhou a demon on the capitalist road or not?"

"I don't know what group she belongs to. All I know is she's a human and a good one."

"Bloody trying to protect her! Out-and-out reactionary!"

The girl soldier swung her belt and the buckle hit his head, making a sound that startled the playground. We still hadn't recovered from our panic when Wei Jinxing was led on to the stage, blood all over his face. He was forcibly held and his head half-shaved like Zhou, and thus he became the first to join her as a target of criticism.

Of course, his room was immediately searched. They found no incriminating evidence at all, only that large photo. Then the photo was stuck on a large character poster, in order to "show the masses." That was the first time I saw it; it showed a girl who was definitely not pretty, but spirited and with a cheerful smile.

ACCORDING TO a certain logical "inevitability", Wei Jinxing was shut up in an underground room with a label saying "Hooligan bad element" hung by the "masses surveillance group."

Two days later, the "masses surveillance group" dragged Wei Jinxing out to reform him through labour. They gave him a broom and made him sweep the playground toilets.

That day I was dubbed "Person in favour with those on the capitalist road" and was also sent to the playground to reform through labour. My task was to weed at the edges. Just as I was practically fainting from the heat, there suddenly came a heart-rending sound. It was a sound I'd never heard in my life before and could never bear to hear again. I reckon that if you took someone's flesh and threw it into hot oil, he could never make such a sound. Only a man's soul thrown into hot oil could produce such a howl.

I raised my head and looked in the direction the sound was coming from. It was Wei Jinxing. He'd found the photo stuck on the big character poster to "show the masses." He sprang forward like a lion and was of course immediately seized by his escort. Then they grappled together. Needless to say, soon other members of the "masses surveillance group" came to support their comrade-in-arms. Two minutes later, Wei Jinxing was kicked and taken back to the underground room. The sun shone brightly on the gleaming white playground. After all this, I seemed to be seeing stars and a kaleidoscope turned in front of me. I fainted face-up on the playground.

As everyone knows, afterwards a whole lot of things happened in the school that are hard to imagine but really did take place. I only want to tell you that one day, after the majority of teachers, including myself and Wei, had been released by the workers' propaganda team that came to stay in our school, Yu suddenly rushed up to me in a state of excitement. "Talk about stubborn—Wei Jinxing's got another photo in his drawer—it's the same one as before—he must have had it made from the old negative!"

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This time Yu didn't say how he'd found out but I believed him. At first I wanted to say to Yu, "What does a photo matter? It's his own business"... but I finally swallowed it back. At that time things were going well again for Yu. Under the successive régimes of Red Guards, Work Teams, "rebels", Workers' Propaganda Teams, he'd endlessly kept repeating his trilogy: how first he'd taken the lead in crossing over from "struggling with self and criticising revisionism", then for a while he'd become active in "line struggle", after that it was "having been deceived and turning the gun on one's own group." Obviously our political life needed a model member of the masses like Yu—and it wasn't surprising he couldn't understand a difficult character like Wei Jinxing who wouldn't bow down.

FINALLY THE DAY CAME when the Gang of Four was toppled. There were big changes at school. I realised that working for the Four Modernisations was revolution—our daily teaching was revolutionary activity. After this simple truth was confirmed we gradually seemed to wake from a dream. Everyone was very happy. Yu could stop performing the "trilogy" that bored him and everyone else stiff. A rare smile appeared on Wei Jinxing's face.

In the struggle to get the school back into shape and raise the quality of teaching, Wei was a member of our teaching group, and was outstanding.

That was in the spring of 1977. There was a Youth League member in the third year—a boy with untidy hair like a hedgehog. He was very active on the extra-curricular side, but his academic work—particularly maths—wasn't good. At first he kept failing mid-term exams, then he simply failed to hand in his homework. Yu was his teacher. He brought him to the staffroom for a chat. The boy knew he was in the wrong, but just kept saying,

"I can't do it."

Yu put on a stern expression and ordered him, "Sit here and do the work. Don't go until you're finished!"

The student spread out his exercise books, looked at the questions and sighed.

"Too hard, I can't do this one."

Yu was livid.

"What the hell do you think you're at? Just get on with it. Tell me which ones you can't do and I'll explain!"

The boy scowled and gnawed his pen but wouldn't put it to paper. A lot of us teachers went over to criticise him. At this point, Wei Jinxing appeared noiselessly beside him. I just saw him bend forward and pat the boy on the shoulder. From his breast pocket he pulled a card with questions on it, put it in front of the boy and said kindly.

"Well, I expect you can do this type of problem."

The student took the card and looked at it—his face grew even redder and without raising his head he said,

"No. When he was explaining this type of problem I didn't really understand."

Yu was so angry he ground his teeth—but Wei whipped another question card out of his pocket and passed it over.

"What about this kind?"

The student took it, gnawed his pen, dropped his head and said,

"Well, I could try—but I probably won't be able to do it."

Nobody reacted. Wei took a third card out and handed it over.

The student looked at it and heaved a sigh of relief.

"I can do this kind. It was after this I got into a muddle."

Wei Jinxing patted his shoulder.

"Then begin from these questions."

The student began and Wei Jinxing took out the remaining cards and put them in front of Yu, adding by way of explanation:

"Sometimes students don't know clearly how far they are behind—I made some question cards of different standards, so you can estimate how far they lag behind. Have a look and give them back the day after tomorrow."

When he'd finished, he didn't wait for Yu's reply, and again, without a noise, disappeared.

Because of this, everyone admired Wei Jinxing. However, privately—perhaps it was the "role of inertia" as in physics—everyone still thought he was a freak.

IT WAS SPRING, 1978. The yellow petals of the winter jasmine had all withered and green leaves were showing. After many years of not having lived at the school, I returned to live in the hostel. Because the home I'd made

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with my wife and son was too far from the school and because this spring I had such enthusiasm for work, I decided to go home just twice a week and on the other evenings concentrate on preparing classes at the hostel. Only after I'd been living back at the school a few days did I notice Wei Jinxing's room—still the plain white curtains, still the "Trespassers keep out" atmosphere. Only the trees outside had thickened somewhat. When the evening wind passed, the sound made by the leaves rubbing together made me think of water in a ravine, and then my thoughts progressed to the years and months gone by, and brought back a lot of memories.

I stepped lightly over to the plane tree, and stretched out my hand to stroke the bark; looking up, from the gaps between the leaves, the stars glowed mysteriously. I thought, this is really odd. These ten years there have been so many great changes in the universe. Even this piece of land we live on has been engulfed by so many soul-stirring storms but in my mind's eye I can see the strange situation in this small room hasn't changed a bit.

I suddenly felt how much Wei Jinxing was to be pitied. We, after all, had our small families, and although the room was small and life was hard, still I had my wife and son and the contentment of having a family. "The sparrow is small, but he lacks for nothing. . . ."

However, as I walked a few steps with my hands behind my back under the trees, I suddenly had another thought. Perhaps, if Wei were to look at us, it is we who deserve the pity even more. He after all had dared to keep a photo like that in his drawer; in the depths of his heart he had preserved a private tenderness. But we, or rather I, hadn't even kept a diary over these past years; and when I wrote to friends or relations, I wrote so that my words could at any time have been publicly written on a big character poster, because I had seen this kind of thing happen too often. I had already got used to speaking, doing things, and dealing with people "safely" and according to "orthodoxy." To be honest, I didn't have the courage in my own life to keep things like the photo in the drawer. . . .

Suddenly the light in Wei Jinxing's room went out. The silver moonlight pouring to the ground outside his room made me feel as though I were inside a vessel of pure, clear ice. Bathing in this clear moonlight made me think for the first time: Wei isn't a freak, he's an extraordinarily normal person. . . .

I never thought that one day, in his life that was so monotonous and perplexing to others, there would suddenly be a big change. That day I was in the middle of correcting the students' exercises. Suddenly there was a knock at the door. I opened it and saw Wei Jinxing. He came in rubbing his hands, a strange look in his sunken eyes, very embarrassed, and mumbling,

"Could I . . . could you sleep at home for a few days and let me stay here for a bit? . . ."

Of course he could, but for Wei to break the routine of his life, descend from on high to live temporarily in my chaotic room, was hard for me to grasp. What was going on?

"A relative's coming, wants to stay for a few days, so. . . ."

So that was it. I immediately gave him everything—the room, bed, quilt . . . . I said to him,

"Feel free to stay—I've got my own home."

When I left the school I went past his room. I just saw the shadow of a woman on the curtain; I could hear her voice and that of a child. How was she related to Wei? I'd never heard him mention her before.

WEI JINXING'S RELATIVE soon became the object of attention of all the teachers. She looked about forty, short with no waist. Her face was thin—the wrinkles round her eyes quite pronounced. She looked worn out.

She left early and returned late, so she didn't often show her face. People saw much more of the little boy she'd brought, who looked about five or six. When she called him, she used to shout "Number three." Obviously he was her third child. Every day at noon, we all saw Wei Jinxing go to the canteen to get the child food. He'd buy two meat dishes, then take them to the hostel with some rice and make sure the child was properly fed. The boy was very naughty; he wanted to take the bowl outside to eat. He ate greedily—his cheeks bulged for ages and bits dropped from the corners of his mouth.

One day, towards evening, I was about to go home when in the distance I saw Wei Jinxing with a paper snake, crouching beneath the

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plane trees. He was blowing into the snake and teasing the child who was chuckling and waving his small hands about. I was very surprised by the scene. I thought back to 1966, when under the dictatorship of the "masses surveillance group" I was once shut up with Wei Jinxing for several days in the biology specimens room. All the nice specimens, birds and rabbits, etc., had long ago been stolen; only human skulls and various kinds of snake remained. Wei didn't mind the skulls at all, but he was particularly scared of snakes, even though they were bottled in chemicals. He always wanted to keep a distance of at least three metres and he kept pointing at them and saying they were disgusting. However, in front of his relative and the little boy he wasn't at all impatient and kept playing with the snake. The child obviously adored such a lifelike toy; as soon as he saw the paper snake writhing about he'd clap his hands in delight and his eyes would go into little slits.

"What a freak", I heard Yu say in my ear.

"Yes." I agreed without thinking.

One day, after school, as Yu and I were riding home on our bikes, he began gossiping:

"Do you know what Wei Jinxing's relative is here for? She's come to Peking to air a complaint! They say her husband's still locked up. Do you know what Wei's been doing recently when he's finished preparing classes? Helping that woman correct her letter of complaint! Think carefully—the woman's face; does it look like the photo in his drawer?"

I don't know why. I suddenly got really angry. I looked at Yu and said,

"Why are you always thinking about this?"

But, back home, my thoughts didn't calm down for ages. Yes, at first glance the woman's face didn't resemble the photo at all, but if you loooked very carefully, there was a slight similarity of spirit. Did that mean . . . ?

MORE THAN TEN DAYS LATER, one Friday afternoon, Wei Jinxing, under the general gaze, took the woman and child to the station. The woman's face looked dark; obviously she'd presented her petition and for the time being hadn't got any result. But the child was happy. In one hand he carried a half-eaten stick of miniature toffee-apples, in the other a toy train a foot long. Wei Jinxing was carrying various bundles and as he walked out of the school gate with them, his face looked calm and oblivious. Some people observed them from the office window; some were in front of the building or under the trees. They were making gestures and pulling faces to show their feelings about Wei, but nobody discussed the matter openly.

After it was over, everything seemed to return to normal, Wei Jinxing worked hard with us every day and went back to his own room at night. What did he do apart from preparing classes and correcting homework? I don't know.

To return again to the selection of outstanding teachers. When I'd reported to my superiors what had happened at the first meeting, Zhou, the party branch secretary, said,

"How could there be only one person nominating Wei?"

I said,

"Probably because everyone knows he's a freak. He doesn't attract people."

Zhou then hummed and hahed a bit;

"One has to look at his work record."

So the second meeting was held. Zhou took part. This time I took the lead and nominated Wei as a model teacher. Nobody opposed, but on the lists on which people wrote their five choices only Wu and two other middle-aged teachers had included Wei, and they put him last. Of the five who *were* elected, to be quite frank, there were at least two whose teaching was inferior to Wei Jinxing's. But the melon which is squeezed too hard isn't sweet; it was best to leave it like that. At which point I was going to end the evaluation session. I looked once more round the whole room and asked routinely,

"Has anyone anything more to say?"

Beside me, Yu urged,

"OK, OK, nobody's disputing the choice."

But Wei Jinxing, who was sitting in the corner, suddenly spoke up.

"I have something to say."

People couldn't help feeling surprised, and naturally turned round to look at him.

With Wei Jinxing's dark skin it wasn't easy for people to see when he was blushing, but at this point you could see he was rather red. In his eyes there was an expression of stubbornness mixed with hope. He stopped for a few seconds, as if he were making a big decision, then finally in a low voice he said:

"I'm very happy to take part in this selec-

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tion of model teachers. In the past some teachers were wrongly classed as rightists. Having been burdened by their past for years, they're now free. They're successful at work and everyone has shown their support in their evaluation. I really support implementing policies like this. But can one apply the policies to other . . . other things? . . . "

The whole meeting was struck dumb; it was as if everyone had stopped breathing and was waiting for him to continue. But Wei Jinxing suddenly looked down, lowered his hands, and said no more. Only his adam's apple moved.

WHEN THE MEETING had dispersed, I went with Zhou towards the Party branch secretary's office. Zhou frowned deeply; her eyes seemed fixed in the distance. She asked in a whisper,

"Do you know what Wei Jinxing wanted to say?"

Suddenly I felt as if pictures on a screen had come into focus and formed a series of close-ups—the big photo of the woman's face, the window of the eight-metre room, Wei Jinxing hunched up on the sofa at the Youth League branch rectification meeting that year, his words "I feel sick" and the subsequent beating with the bronze buckled belt, Wei rushing like a tiger on the big character poster and the heart-rending howl, the woman visitor with her slit-eyed child, the paper snake coiling and stretching, the scene of seeing off the mother and child .... I felt an idea forming in my mind, then I replied with conviction;

"He was asking, could those policies be applied to character, especially to a rather eccentric character?"

I also wanted to add for him,

"Assuming someone works hard for the glory and strength of his motherland, can he be allowed to retain some personal privacy?"

Zhou nodded in agreement and said with some passion, "Yes, for many years our political life hasn't been normal. People have been so influenced by the Left; they couldn't tolerate Wei Jinxing's character and his personal secrets. This is simply a small example . . . to get people fully committed to socialism, and get them to stick together for the sake of the revolution and yet let them keep some freedom for themselves requires a lot of work still. . . ."

While talking, we'd come to the door of the Party branch secretary's office. At this point, I saw the icicles under the eaves melting in the sunlight; the water fell drop by drop on to the edge of the steps making a rhythmic sound.

Translated by Rose Heatley

Silver Wedding

Her smile is his inquistor.
He cannot think what it might be,
the required answer.

They learnt their disenchantment in their dreams.
Sleep does for everyone, sooner or later:
affection, like Uranus, is castrated.

Love was an annunciation,
an angel delivering messages for a god
they weren't even sure they believed in.

Their hearts are condemned
houses, hurting
for occupation.

Michael Hulse

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R.P.C. Hanson

It *is* a Religious Issue

Some Drastic Proposals for an End to the Miseries of Irish Sectarianism

IF WE ARE TO BE HONEST in our assessment of the situation in Northern Ireland, we must declare that the prospects for reconciliation are bad.

To the visitor the scene in Northern Ireland looks not very different from that in Great Britain. The pillar boxes are of the same colour. The same language (approximately) is spoken. The streets, pubs, factories, farms, harbours and shops look much the same. But there is a vast and vital difference between the two countries. All through society in Northern Ireland there runs an invisible but terribly real rift, cleavage, division which alters the whole scene and makes the province as different from England as France is different, perhaps more so. This is the cleavage between the 65% Protestant and the 35% Catholic population, a cleavage that runs through every aspect of life, not only religion but education, sport, social life, and leaves nothing unaffected. If you meet a stranger and begin talking to him you spend the first five minutes of the conversation carefully feeling round to discover clues to his religious identity; and when you have found that, you know the really significant thing about him—which side he belongs to, which set of beliefs and practices he professes, and, inseparably bound up with these, what his politics are. The two sides are not distinguished by one being black and one white, nor by speaking different languages; but they are no less severed than people who are divided by these marks.

RICHARD HANSON, *Assistant Bishop of Manchester and Professor of Historical and Contemporary Theology at the University of Manchester, was from 1941–45 a curate first in Dublin and then in County Down, and from 1970–73 Bishop of Clogher. His publications include the "New Clarendon Commentary on Acts" (1967), "Groundwork for Unity" (1971), and "Christian Priesthood Examined" (Lutterworth Press, 1979); he is the editor of "The Pelican Guide to Modern Theology" (1969).*

The outstanding feature in political life in Northern Ireland is the total absence of a liberal tradition. Democracy in Great Britain works because it is lubricated by the oil of liberalism. There is admitted to be some common ground between all the parties. There exists an unacknowledged agreement that between the various opinions represented in political life and the measures arising out of them there must be some give-and-take, some cooperation, some common aim, some respect for the opinions of the other side. Without this lubrication democracy cannot work and in fact has never worked.

That oil of liberalism is almost completely lacking in Northern Ireland. There the parties represent totally opposed viewpoints with apparently nothing in common between them, or at any rate nothing admitted as common. There, concession in politics is an admission of weakness which will be used as blackmail by the other side. There, any attempt to see the other side's point of view or to make allowance for it is not regarded as broadmindedness but as treason. Consequently democracy does not work in Northern Ireland, and never has worked, and several powerful forces operate to ensure that it never shall work. This is what makes the situation quite different from the British situation, so different that it is an anomaly that the politics of Northern Ireland and the politics of Great Britain should belong to the same system. They operate on different assumptions.

Beneath this unyielding confrontation, this refusal to make the compromises which alone enable democracy to work, lie profound fears entertained by each of the two communities for the other. This has been said often before, but it must be repeated. The Catholics are afraid of the political power of the Protestants. They are afraid that the Protestants will use both the political power and the social influence which their majority position gives them to push the Catholics into an

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inferior position, to make them second-class citizens who come at the end of the queue in such things as housing, jobs, and controlling local government. The Protestants, on the other hand, are afraid of the religious power of the Catholics. They are afraid that if it is given the opportunity the Catholic Church will use its authority to dominate society, as it has to a large extent dominated society in the Republic of Ireland, and introduce an ethos and a climate of opinion, expressed in such things as legislation about marriage and divorce and family planning, which are unacceptable to the Protestants and which they do not think that they ought to be asked to tolerate.

UNHAPPILY, both these fears, far from being fantastic, have very good grounds for existing. Ever since the attempts in the 1960s to liberalise the policy of the Unionist Party (made by such leaders as Lord O'Neill, Chichester-Clark, and Brian Faulkner) were wrecked by the intransigence of right-wing politicians and their followers, Catholics have had little reason to imagine that if the Protestants gained power in a revived Stormont they would show any more understanding of the Catholic point of view or make more concessions to it than they did before; and frequent unsavoury incidents (such as that connected with a recent appointment at Craigavon) reinforce this conclusion. Conversely the Catholic Church has made little or no attempt to reassure the Protestants concerning their fears of its desire to establish an ascendance over society. On the contrary, at every election clerical influence is exerted blatantly; and any suggestion concerning the ending of segregation of education, which certainly contributes to the rift between the communities and tends towards nursing a hatred of everything British, is met with indignant cries of protest.

These fears, each side continually nourishing those of the other, have brought about the most serious situation in Northern Ireland since the frightful disturbances of 60 years ago. Large numbers of troops have to be stationed in the province. A fully-armed part-time Home Guard is kept constantly on the alert. The police remain armed. Even so, terrorist murders and outrages continue in an unending stream, and large numbers of people are forced to pay regular contributions as "protection money" to unofficial armed gangs.

I HAVE, OF COURSE, painted a black scene, and there are mitigating circumstances and examples to the contrary.

In certain ways the different denominations seem to be closer to each other than before. The leaders of the churches meet regularly to confer. When a crisis occurs, instead of each leader issuing a separate, politically motivated, statement opposing

Loyalty Test

A 35-year-old Roman Catholic, Mr Timothy Duffy, of Craigavon, claims that religious discrimination by the loyalist-controlled Craigavon council stopped his promotion from a middle-ranking to a senior recreation officer. With nearly five years' experience of handling an annual budget of up to £1m, a 100-strong workforce and a string of management diplomas to his name, Mr Duffy went before the council's selection panel. In the chair was Alderman Johnny Wright, who pointedly asked Mr Duffy: "Are you loyal?". Whether Mr Wright meant loyal to God, Ulster, the Queen, the council—or all four—is still unclear.

But the question was hardly necessary. Had Mr Wright (who later resigned after a punch-up with a council officer) checked, he would have found Mr Duffy to be a supporter of the non-sectarian Alliance party, a family man living happily with his neighbours on a largely Protestant housing estate, deeply respected by the Protestant trade-union leader of his workforce and regarded very much as a man of the future in the field of local government recreation.

The panel awarded Mr Duffy the highest all-round marks for "qualifications, experience and intelligence". Yet in the private session that followed he somehow did not get the job. It went instead to the ex-gardener of Ulster's late Unionist prime minister, Lord Brookeborough. One of the successful candidate's more recent jobs had been caring for the flower beds and football pitches of Larne council.

On September 13th at Armagh appeal court Judge Frank Russell cleared Craigavon council of religious discrimination. Despite a few criticisms of the selection procedure, which the judge interpreted as "maladministration" rather than discrimination, his verdict was a severe blow, perhaps even mortal, for a public body, the Fair Employment Agency, which had fought for Mr Duffy as a test case with a dossier of detailed evidence.

Craigavon council with some 40 managerial posts—none of them now held by Catholics—has refused to sign an FEA undertaking not to discriminate, along with 18 other loyalist-dominated councils (there are 26 councils in Ulster).

THE ECONOMIST

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the other, as before, they are more likely now to issue a common statement asking for calm. All over the province little groups of people representing both sides of the great divide are meeting for discussion and prayer. Efforts such as the Peace Movement, the Corrymeela Community, and the Irish School of Ecumenics have come into existence and are doing good work in the cause of reconciliation. One or two places, such as the city of Derry, are giving a fine example of cooperation and consultation between Catholics and Protestants. In short, in the name of creating reconciliation and understanding things have happened and are happening which 20 years ago would have been thought impossible. We should thank God for them and by no means belittle them.

But we are bound to notice that sectarianism and distrust have grown quite as fast as have attempts at reconciliation. By "sectarianism" I mean the deliberate policy of fomenting hatred in the name of Christianity: the conscious encouragement and creation of distrust of other people who call themselves Christians; the launching of unscrupulous and continuous attacks by word of mouth and in print upon fellow Christians; the exaggeration of differences between denominations; the dissemination of crude and violent propaganda blackening the characters and deriding the religious beliefs of others.

This policy is now openly pursued by one political party in this province which ironically uses the name "Democratic" in its title but which is much more reminiscent of the spirit of the late Dr Goebbels, who belonged, after all, to a party which ironically used the name "Socialist." This party dedicated to sowing hatred has corresponding to it, though not identical with it, what is called a church entitled "Free." And this so-called "church" supports the political aims of its political party by expressing and circulating on every possible occasion the most virulent hatred and derision of all other ecclesiastical bodies and persons in the province. In the name of Christ it preaches hatred and dissension. Under the banner of the Prince of Peace it calls to religious conflict. While professing the Gospel it contributes steadily to the cause of bringing all Christianity in Northern Ireland into disrepute and contempt throughout the world. So ugly, so evil a phenomenon has not been seen before, even in the unhappy history of Ireland. Only the Protestants of Ulster, nourished for centuries on sectarian hatred, could produce so vile, so disgraceful a sight as this. Any decent Ulsterman should feel deeply ashamed that ecclesiastical cowardice and political manipulation and the anti-intellectualist tone which has always prevailed in religious circles in Northern Ireland should have brought things to this pass.

CATHOLICS HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY assisted and still are assisting a policy of unscrupulous murder and terrorism more powerful and more effective than any seen in Ulster for 60 years. Not all Catholics, of course, support this, but some certainly do; just as not all Protestants support the sectarianism, though some do. The campaign of terrorism is not sectarian but political, even though the only classification by which it can distinguish its enemies is a religious rather than a political one. But murder is murder, however described; irresponsible planting of bombs and incendiary devices is a horrible, malicious, devilish policy, even when by a kind of providential economy the agents of it blow themselves up. The policy has been directly and explicitly condemned by the Pope present in Ireland and as applied to Ireland can on no conceivable hypothesis be justified by an appeal to Christianity. But it continues, and continues to exasperate feelings and harden attitudes, in short to put off even further and further the reconciliation between the two divided parts and populations of Ireland which is the avowed aim of the engineers of this terrorism. It is part of the dreadful polarisation of opinion which has overtaken this province.

No, in spite of some hopeful signs the prospects for reconciliation in Northern Ireland appear dim.

I PUBLISHED an article in *The Times* on 5 January 1980, called *"How Christians can help a new initiative in Northern Ireland"*, in which I appealed to the leaders of the churches, having in mind particularly the Protestant churches, to inaugurate a campaign against sectarianism.

I had hoped, perhaps fatuously, that some church leader in Northern Ireland would write to me about this, that somebody there might take some notice of what I had suggested. My suggestions were, by the standards of Church life in England (which are not those of Ireland), perfectly reasonable and eminently practical. In the Church of Ireland at any rate all the bishops are personally known to me. Seven months have elapsed, and I have not had a single letter from any church leader upon the subject. Even if *The Times* is not read in Northern Ireland, the local papers are, and they all obligingly carried notices of this article. What am I

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to conclude from this? That when I said in this article, "It would be interesting to see if the Irish churches have the courage and imagination to take up this challenge" I looked in vain for either courage or imagination? That I have been written off by my fellow-bishops as a champion of hopelessly unrealistic ideas and policies? Probably the answer to both questions is in the affirmative. I am reminded of the lines of Macaulay in describing the behaviour of augurs when lightning strikes a tree:

> *"And the pale augurs, muttering low,*
> *Gaze on the blasted head."*

If the ecclesiastical authorities in Northern Ireland are reduced to a kind of helpless silence, as the ecclesiastical authorities in the Lebanon are, then indeed prospects for reconciliation are black.

BUT MY design now is to discuss not only prospects but possibilities, not only what is being done or is likely in the immediate future to be done for reconciliation, but what might or could be done. Let me now turn to this subject.

First, let us eliminate some possibilities which are proposed frequently in public debate in Ulster and in Great Britain but which are unrealistic or undesirable. The most often-heard possibility is that British troops should be withdrawn gradually or immediately from the province, leaving the inhabitants to defend themselves or to fight among themselves, as they think fit. This is a policy which is put forward often in England (and abroad), and perhaps it is gaining increasing support. I do not think that I am misrepresenting the Left wing of the Labour Party in that country when I attribute it to them. And of course there are many people (but not the Social Democratic and Labour Party) in Ulster who support this policy. It is not at all impossible that political circumstances in Britain should occur in which this policy would appeal to a government in power in Westminster as a quick way of saving money, ridding the government of a perennial problem and winning easy popularity. Unionist supporters in Ulster should be made aware of the fact that this train of events is on the cards, though not perhaps probable. For the Unionist-Protestant ideology has actually very little appeal to British voters in the 1980s, and, it is time that any illusions about this should be banished from the minds of all Ulster people.

In fact this option, which certainly is a possibility, is not one to be welcomed. It would directly contravene solemn engagements given by successive British Prime Ministers of different political colours. It would rouse such anger and fear among the Protestant population of Ulster as would be very likely to impel them into taking arms to which they certainly have access and starting a bloody civil war. It would create a very dangerous power vacuum in the whole of Ireland. It would be an act of disgraceful weakness, a direct surrender to and encouragement of terrorism. It would be a shamefully irresponsible act. The British are inclined to speak airily of leaving the Irish to fight each other, forgetting that the policies and measures of British governments in the past have largely contributed to creating the situation in which Irishmen are likely to fight each other. Britain is involved with Ireland because she has in the past governed, indeed exploited, Ireland. She cannot, without disgrace, abandon that responsibility. When she suddenly pulled out of India 30 years ago, the results were horrible, the massacre of millions of Indians. Grand gestures very often have dreadful consequences.

THE FACT IS that the possibility of Ireland being united in the near future (say, in my lifetime) does not exist. Many people regret this, and I am among those who regret it. My residence of three years in the diocese of Clogher convinced me, among other things, that the people of the Six Counties are just as Irish in their own way as the people of the Twenty-six Counties, and are as charming and as exasperating as the rest of the Irish. But the reunion of Ireland is not a real possibility in the near future. It could only come about by a gradual process of reconciliation, a slow recognition of common interests, a long period of conversion to a new political viewpoint. The possibility for this does not exist at the moment, and the force most directly hindering and preventing it is the activities of the IRA. In the memorable words of the late Cardinal Conway, "You cannot bomb a million Protestants into the Republic." Every official murdered, every bomb planted, puts the reunion of Ireland further away. In their blind obsession with violence the blood-steeped agents of terror are working directly against their own interests.

On the other hand, the integration of Ulster into Great Britain is equally impossible. If Scotland and Wales are beginning tentatively to experience an identity even against England, how much more must Northern Ireland also do so! One has only to observe a general election in Great Britain and in Northern Ireland in order to see that Northern

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Ireland does not belong in Great Britain. The issues debated in each country, the platforms from which parties campaign, are completely different. And to say that what the majority in Northern Ireland wants is to retain "the British way of life" is cant. Northern Ireland has never known the British way of life and would not like it if it had it. Two outstanding characteristics of the British way of life are a liberal tolerance of people of different political opinions and a remarkable political sagacity and maturity. Ulster has neither. One might add as a corollary that the successful working of a democratic system is the outcome of the British way of life, and that this experience also is quite strange to Northern Ireland. This province is indeed what Dervla Murphy called it in the title of her remarkable book, *A Place Apart* (1978). It cannot be compared to England or Wales or Scotland or to all of them together. Its political assumptions and behaviour are more like those of the United States of America than those of Great Britain. Its problems, its ethos, its history, its character, both in the good and the bad points, simply do not fit into the British scene. Britain may be suffering from economic decline, social malaise, and polarisation in politics, but that decline, malaise, and polarisation are quite different from any observable in Northern Ireland. Therefore a future for the province which simply consists in uneasy maintenance of the *status quo*, which acquiesces indefinitely in the refusal of Ulster political parties to agree on any plan for making the country politically viable, is a most unsatisfactory policy, a counsel of despair. I do not wish to consider counsels of despair.

Captive Churches

BEHIND ALL THE PROBLEMS which afflict Northern Ireland lies one assumption that creates them and perpetuates them. This is the identification of religion with politics, or to be more exact the identification of denominational allegiance with allegiance to particular political parties and political convictions. Each religious community has its own political ideology: the Protestants an ideology which identifies being Protestant with the maintenance of the union with Great Britain; the Catholics the ideology which identifies being Catholic with desiring an Irish Republic comprising all the 32 counties of Ireland.

It is quite inaccurate to say that the difference between these two ideologies is purely theological or religious, though a few Protestant fanatics appear to believe so. It is equally untrue, however, to regard the conflict between the ideologies as a matter of social and political tensions and rivalries, adopting religious slogans as a mere pretext. This is an interpretation of the situation in Northern Ireland which is quite common in Britain and almost universal on the Continent and elsewhere abroad. But it is most misleading to present the situation in this way.

Those who perpetuate these ideologies genuinely believe that their religion is bound up with them, and religion is indeed used to fire hatred and stoke dissension in this province, but not cynically. It is not a question of Lord Randolph Churchill deliberately "playing the Orange card" as a political manoeuvre. The leaders of the Unionist Party who used religious issues to prevent the achievement of Home Rule between 1880 and 1914 were indeed for the most part doing so cynically and hypocritically; but the Ulstermen whom they were championing were dupes, not frauds. In Northern Ireland religion and politics are in the minds of the great majority of the people bound up together, genuinely and sincerely regarded as inseparable. The results are manifestly disastrous to both religion and politics. Nobody who had any political maturity or any critical capacity in religious matters could accept this identification for an instant. But then in Northern Ireland political maturity and critical capacity in religious subjects are at a discount.

THE RESULT OF THIS DISASTROUS identification of political with religious issues is that the various denominations are helpless to remedy the situation.

They have all, with a few honourable exceptions such as the Society of Friends and the Unitarians, for long not only acquiesced in the situation but actively encouraged it. They have long ago bartered away their integrity and freedom as Christian bodies in exchange for the support of their people. They have been in the past largely responsible for creating the situation which now faces them. When they are presented with the nemesis which their uncritical support of the identification of religion and politics has so direfully brought upon them, they are bewildered and incredulous. This fine policy of supporting Church principles or the Catholic faith or the truths of the Reformation has ended in child murder and sectarian assassination, making the Christianity of Northern Ireland a hissing and contempt through the rest of the world. It does not sound credible to

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spend about a century teaching your people that your neighbour is a popish idolator who does not deserve the name of Christian, or a heretic oppressor and enemy of the true faith whose morals are deplorable, and then suddenly to turn and say, "O, by the way, he is your brother in Christ whom you ought to love and cherish. . . ." The churches of Northern Ireland are captive churches, prisoners of the ideologies which they have fed.

IT IS TO THIS fundamental fact, the identification of political and religious issues and convictions, that any hopeful policy for Northern Ireland must address itself. The appalling folly, error, and danger of this identification must be brought home to the people of Northern Ireland. To quote a phrase from my *Times* article, "Gentlemanly silence is not enough." This applies to the Westminster government as much as it applies to the major denominations.

One faces at once the painful difficulty which the British have always had and still have in understanding the Irish situation. This is a country where religion really matters. Such a situation is almost inconceivable in Britain, where the first, almost irresistible, impulse is to avoid religious issues, to escape becoming entangled in anything to do with religion. That religion is a man's private business, the sentiment so memorably uttered by Lord Melbourne, is deeply engrained in the British mind. And the British still shrink from facing any issues which involve religion, even where religion is being blatantly, unscrupulously, and noisily exploited by one powerful political party.

Similarly, no major religious denomination is ready to face the unpalatable fact that it, with the others, is part of the problem with which all are confronted. Pope John Paul II recently echoed, in Ireland, the comforting slogan that the conflict is not really religious. This is adopted as an excuse by Protestants as readily as by Catholics; but it is no more than half true.

To allow covenants to be signed in churches, to fly Orange flags on churches, to tolerate clergy walking in Orange processions and holding Orange services, to permit the erection of shrines in memory of those who were killed in street fighting, and the singing of *Faith of Our Fathers* at the funerals of terrorists, to insist upon a rigidly separate education for children of the Church—and then to be surprised and horrified at sectarian murder and civil disturbance—is to be either very naive or very deceitful. Perhaps the attitude of the major denominations is a mixture of naivety and self-deceit. But until all denominations accept a share of common guilt for what has happened, and acknowledge that all are still contributing to the conflict even while they condemn it, this dreadful identification of religion and politics will continue to corrupt religion and bedevil politics. Each side is perfectly willing to indulge in condemnation, but of the other, not themselves. Self-justification, self-righteousness, a refusal to criticise oneself, are quite inconsistent with authentic Christianity, whether in its traditional Catholic or in its Reformed Protestant form.

Honesty about religion—a rare commodity in Northern Ireland—demands that both Protestants and Catholics should admit that the conflict which divides and troubles the province *is* a religious one, does involve religion, in the worst sense of that term. The identification of religion and politics to which they have all in the past subscribed, to which in some measure they are still contributing, creates conflict and breeds self-perpetuating hatred.

Fanatic & Bigot

I THERFORE WILL devote the last pages of this article to making suggestions for possible new moves designed to bring about reconciliation in Northern Ireland. I must warn you at the outset that what I suggest will be drastic though not, I believe, impracticable. But in the present stalemate situation in the province drastic policies are necessary.

Northern Ireland constitutes a standing source of tension, disturbance and danger not only to the British Isles but to a wider area. It is damaging to the image of democracy, fair play, and law-abidingness which has on the whole in the past been associated with Britain. It is always liable to bedevil the relations of the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It is a perennial distraction and obstruction to the policies and plans of the government of the Republic of Ireland. Above all, it is a constant reproach to the fair name of Christianity throughout the world. I do not think that Christians in Ulster appreciate what frightful damage they are doing to the reputation of Christianity as a whole. Ulstermen have never been good at looking beyond their own shores; the myopic, parochial outlook of Christianity in Ulster has always been one of its worst defects. Few of

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them are today capable of realising that while they imagine that they are standing gallantly for the principles of the Reformation or the Catholic faith, the rest of the world, Catholic, Protestant, of every religion or of none, regards both sides as equally dedicated to the blackening of the name of Christianity, and does so with good reason. I make no apology therefore for the fact that my course of treatment for the Six Counties is a drastic one.

1. I believe that sectarianism, a phenomenon which I have already defined quite carefully, must be identified and fought. Hitherto the government and the major denominations have maintained on this subject what I have called a gentlemanly silence. This particularly applies to the Protestant churches. They are in fact the chief sufferers from sectarianism. The Roman Catholic Church, as a church, has suffered scarcely at all from its intemperate vilification. The Protestant denominations are much more vulnerable to its assaults because it can constantly represent itself as the only wholehearted opponent of Rome to their flocks, many among whom virtually identify the Christian faith with opposition to Roman Catholicism.

I can understand the policy of genteel silence concerning this menace which has hitherto been adopted. It seems better to suffer silently than to descend to the same level of vulgar calumniation. But in fact in the sectarianism movement something more than an anti-Catholic rabble-rousing has appeared. More than a touch of Fascism can be discerned in the Democratic Unionist party, a blind intolerance backed by demagogic oratory reminiscent of Hitler's, which will allow no opposition, makes no concessions, and subordinates all considerations of humanity and common sense to a totalitarian party dogma. It means the death of that liberal, enlightened Christianity which has respect for intellectual integrity. It means the triumph of the fanatic and the bigot. From the point of view of religion it represents the victory of everything that is repulsive, discourteous, vulgar, and contemptible in Ulster Protestantism, a religion without grace, without scholarship, brutal, noisy, unscrupulous. It attacks Catholicism in language more vicious and insulting than any that Catholics have ever used to attack Protestants. In the face of this outrageous force for wickedness, gentlemanliness is as useless as was Chamberlain's attempt to be gentlemanly in his treatment of Hitler. In political terms sectarianism threatens the integrity of the whole province, so fierce is its divisive effect. It represents something which can no longer be shrugged off with a smile.

I believe that the major denominations must be galvanised into making a concerted effort against sectarianism. The effort will be painful, for it will involve each religious tradition discussing the practice of unreflecting vilification of Roman Catholicism which has hitherto been part of its life, and thinking out a new policy of reconciliation, and, most difficult of all, attempting to nurture this new policy at grass-roots level. It would mean devising courses in ecumenical understanding for clergy, introducing teaching on the same subject in Sunday Schools, initiating a debate within each church about the best means to combat sectarianism. It would result in painful encounters and much recrimination, probably in considerable loss of support from those who believe, consciously or unconsciously, that Christianity means being very unpleasant to Roman Catholics. It would involve an uncomfortable rethinking of the meaning of Christianity on the part of many who are not used to thinking, and who do not like having their prejudices disturbed.

I do not, nevertheless, see any alternative for the Protestant churches if they are to retain any sort of integrity or self-respect, if they are to appear in any but the worst light to the rest of the world. Or are they ready to ignore the rest of the world, like the Dutch Reformed Church on the subject of *apartheid*? The pressing problem which faces all Christians in the North of Ireland is the problem of their relations with their fellow Christians: the problem not only of coexisting peaceably, but of how to prevent inherited beliefs and attitudes constantly driving them into collision. If they cannot solve this problem, then their Christianity is patently worthless. We do not today admire those Evangelical Christians of the 18th century who were full of zeal for the gospel and for salvation but who actively supported the slave trade. And we cannot regard as convincing great enthusiasm for Christianity in Northern Ireland which at the same time ignores or even exacerbates the critical question of inter-church relations.

During my three years in the diocese of Clogher I gained the distinct impression that there was a silent conspiracy to ignore this subject. But it can only be ignored at the cost of the credibility and integrity of all the denominations.

ON THE OTHER SIDE, it will be necessary for the Roman Catholics to look carefully at their present policy about education in the North of Ireland.

Arguments can of course be advanced for the right of Catholics to conduct the education of their own children, and in Britain they to a considerable

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extent do so. I am not arguing against religious education in schools. After all, the State schools in Northern Ireland insist upon religious education and on the whole carry it out effectively. What seems to me utterly wrong is the segregation of Catholic children from Protestant children in the system of education. It is ridiculous to say that it does not contribute steadily and significantly to that social rift and social tension which is the curse of the province. Catholic and Protestant young people usually do not meet each other until they reach the level of higher education, and many of them never reach that level. I do not see the necessity of education being controlled by clergy; on the contrary, it seems to me to be a most unsatisfactory way of conducting education.

I have no hesitation in applying this judgment to the Republic of Ireland also. As Bishop of Clogher I was much involved in the education of children in County Monaghan. On more than one occasion those of us who carried responsibility had to chose between good education and denominational education. We always found ourselves pushed into choosing denominational education. The Catholic population of Northern Ireland has indeed the right to give its children religious education suitable to Catholics. But I do not think that it is has the right to dominate that education in such a way as to segregate Catholic from Protestant children at the most impressionable period of their lives. In Northern Ireland of all places this segregation of education seems to me positively immoral, something that should weigh heavily on the consciences of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. A change of policy here would of course involve painful difficulties, outcries, recriminations, passionate opposition. But, as in the case of the Protestant churches, what credibility, what integrity is left if nothing is done about this? A church which continues to contribute to social conflict in complacent unawareness of its own responsibility can make no serious claim to be concerned about reconciliation. History will exact a terrible judgment from those denominations which call for painful sacrifices from other Christians but are ready to make no drastic and disturbing changes in their own life for the sake of peace among Christians.

2. MY NEXT SUGGESTION applies to the government of Northern Ireland. Parallel with efforts by the main denominations against sectarianism should run a series of measures by the government aimed at the same end. It should be ready to deal

"What School Did You Go To?..."

SINCE 1976 the Northern Ireland Fair Employment Agency has been in existence to keep tabs on sectarianism in jobs and equalise opportunity. This is no easy task. Asking what a man's religion is on job application forms is not allowed, nor is positive discrimination—that is, choosing among equals on the basis of religion to achieve a better balance.

Yet unequal opportunities in employment have been the deepest causes of discontent among the Catholic minority. Joblessness among Catholics is two and half times as high as among Protestants and Catholics are often found in the least desirable and remunerative jobs.

It is a fact of life in Northern Ireland that its skilled industrial workers tend to be Protestant. The big firms on which Northern Ireland's reputation grew had a largely Protestant labour force. The high-technology capital-intensive industries find themselves, almost willy-nilly, taking on Protestants to deliver the goods.

HOW DO THEY KNOW which is which? By street address, by surname and, as a recent BBC television programme put it, by "What School Did You Go To?" It is an exercise in which all Ulstermen are versed. Visitors cannot see any discernible difference.

Ford employs two industrial relations specialists, one Protestant, one Catholic, to go over its rolls and see how close in balance they are (about 55% Protestant to 45% Catholic, it seems). Catholics have done better under direct rule, but unequal opportunities persist, in part, because of the increased physical separation of Protestants and Catholics, who were removed from mixed-religion housing estates to homogeneous estates farther out of town. A centre-of-Belfast plant such as the Ulster Weaving Company used to have a mix of both. Now it has mainly Protestants. People became reluctant to travel far from home to get to work. Not surprisingly therefore, the Fair Employment Agency reported last year the sorry fact that Catholics were actually slipping down the social scale. In every area their chances of being unemployed were greater than Protestants.

What the Fair Employment Agency has been trying to do is to see that job openings are advertised on Northern Ireland radio and in the newspapers—not passed on by word of mouth. It tries to make sure that Catholic secondary schools' career advisers know of the opportunities. The agency has also brought legal suits of alleged discrimination; but so far it has found the charge impossible to prove to a court's satisfaction.

Brenda Maddox
IN THE ECONOMIST

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with sectarianism as a positive, identifiable evil, just as in Britain it undertakes to deal with racialism as a positive, recognisable evil. After all, it has little to lose here. In Paisleyism the Westminster government is facing a force which has already engineered one strike that ended the most hopeful experiment of power-sharing, and has attempted since to engineer another. The Conservative Party in Parliament does not need the votes of any Northern Ireland party. There is nothing to stop it declaring itself openly against this ugly monster of political sectarianism which is so blatant an enemy of the peace and welfare of Northern Ireland.

LAWS AGAINST INCITEMENT to hatred and against discrimination on religious grounds are in operation in the Six Counties; but it cannot be said that they are markedly effective. I have not heard of a single successful prosecution taken under them. You cannot, of course, make people moral by act of Parliament, and such laws are difficult to define and even more difficult to enforce. But perhaps something more could be done to make them more effective. It may be difficult to enforce a ban against smoking in a powder magazine, but the effect is well worth while. One measure that could very well be taken is in the field of education. If churches will not include a section on courtesy to people of other religious traditions in their teaching in schools, then the government should make compulsory for all schools in Northern Ireland a course in civics inculcating tolerance and understanding toward other denominations. I hardly think that any religious body except the Free Presbyterians would have the impudence to object to this.

I also think that the government should pay attention to the subject of clergy in politics. The situation here is one of some confusion and injustice. Church of Ireland clergy are forbidden by statute law to sit in Parliament and perhaps by the same principle to sit in a Stormont Parliament, were it to be revived. Roman Catholic priests are forbidden by their canon law to represent constituencies in any parliament in the British Isles. Some Church of England bishops sit in the House of Lords; but no Church of Ireland bishops have had the right to do so since 1869. Free Church clergy, who when the Anglican Church was established in Ireland were formally nonconformists, have for long been eligible to stand for Parliament; and in Northern Ireland several Presbyterian clergy have in the past been elected to both Westminster and the old Stormont Parliament. There is at the moment nothing to stop a man who styles himself a minister of religion standing for a Northern Irish constituency—as long as he is not an Anglican or a Roman Catholic priest. This is an anomalous and most unsatisfactory situation.

I am not arguing for the right of clergy of any sort to sit in Parliament. On the contrary, I think the presence of clergy in the House of Commons, no matter what their ecclesiastical allegiance, a most undesirable thing; and I am not ready to go to the stake in order to defend the right of Church of England bishops to sit in the House of Lords. Clergy, in my opinion, have no business in secular representative assemblies, and even less business to lead or represent political parties in any capacity. In the North of Ireland in present circumstances they are an unsavoury feature of the political scene, equally damaging to politics and religion, living embodiments of all that is rotten in the state of Ulster.

What I am suggesting is that in any future political New Deal for the Six Counties equity should be served by forbidding anybody who is or who styles himself a minister of religion to represent any constituency in a revived Stormont or in the Westminster Parliament. Northern Ireland *is* a place apart. When it had a self-governing assembly, the means of election to it were by proportional representation, first imposed, then abolished, and then restored. Here it differed from Britain's Parliament. I am suggesting that another important difference from Britain might be introduced as part of a resolute and overdue attempt to throw clergy out of party politics. Let a man or woman choose either to be a minister of the Gospel or to be a politician, but not both.

The result of such a measure would certainly be violent opposition, cries of "persecution" and slogans circulated about the liberty of the Gospel. In fact it would be a move towards freeing the Gospel in Ulster from its Babylonish captivity to political ideologies, but determined and unscrupulous opposition there would certainly be. It is quite possible that the Democratic Unionist Party would as a consequence grow in strength and that attempts would be made to coerce the government by a paralysing strike. I believe that it would be the duty of government in those circumstances to resist the strikes by every means at its disposal, to rally all forces willing to combat bigotry and blackmail, and to make it quite clear to those engineering the strikes that they could if they chose ruin their country economically but that the responsibility in

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that event would be theirs. You cannot deal with such forces with kid gloves.

3. I HESITATE to say anything in detail about possibilities for the political future of the Six Counties. It is a deplorable fact that as Ulster cannot govern itself it must be governed from Westminster. The Northern Ireland Office no doubt is on the *qui vive* for 24 hours in every day, but the Cabinet in Downing Street can only occasionally give attention to the question of Ulster. Consequently, government policy emerges in spasmodic instalments, without it being possible to conceive and carry out a carefully planned, meticulously operated, wide-embracing long-term policy for the province, agreed on in outline by both government and opposition and designed to endure for at least ten years.

What Ulster needs is a strong, steady hand, directed by a mind which can conceive and implement a drastic new policy which shall be, and shall declare itself to be, one of education, political, moral and religious, either with the cooperation of or in spite of the churches. I believe that power-sharing in Ulster must be restored in some form and given the chance which it did not have before to prove itself.

I do not see any long-term future for Northern Ireland as a part of the United Kingdom nor any short-term future for it as part of the Republic of Ireland. I think that those, such as Mr Garrett Fitzgerald, who envisage an internationally guaranteed and supported status for the province, either in consultation with the EEC or with the UN or even with the USA, offer the best hope for the future.

As a reluctant and coerced part of the Irish Republic its history would be bloody. As an unwanted and anachronistic appendage to a run-down British Empire its future is bleak and unpromising. British voters, and especially Northern Irish voters, must be prepared for an eventual solution to the question of Northern Ireland which shall involve entrusting its destiny to other authorities as well as to those of the governments of Great Britain and of the Republic of Ireland. Intense determination to confine yourselves to your own backwater ultimately results in being set floating on an international sea.

A Visit to the Ledger Stones of Clerical Ancestors

It does not much upset me
To know so little of those who
Bequeathed me my name.

I suppose they were kindly, I see
They were locals, who never
Whored much after fame.

They took their degrees,
And returned to their acres
And mildly accepted what came.

They knew sweetness and bitter,
A spray of olive on stone
Above the child's name.

They were buried in sunshine and frost
Who were conceived
In the warmth and the rain.

God's peace they had promised
Their people, which their descendants also
Would welcome, supposing it came.

Geoffrey Grigson

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Pasternak's Shakespeare

Alas, poor Boris . . .—By RONALD HINGLEY

LITERARY HISTORY bristles with warnings on the hazards of translating poetry. There is Richard Bentley's devastating "It is a pretty poem, Mr Pope, but you must not call it Homer." There is also the counsel floated in mixed zoological terms in an ingenious sonnet of 1904, "To the Translator", by the Russian poet Vyacheslav Ivanov.

Virgil, lark of fields and pastures,
Albatross Baudelaire, nightingale Verlaine—
Hunt which you will, you'll find it hard
To lure free birds to alien cage . . . .

. . . Foreign verse is slippery, Protean.
Neither by clutch nor daring can you grasp it.
You hold the the fish's tail—but flowing, liquid,
streaming,
It slithers through your flimsy nets.
Be Proteus to Proteus, meet mask with mask.
Better charm leisured ears with fable of your
own.

Ivanov did not heed his own advice, though. Like several other leading Russian poets, he continued to practise the translator's craft—for example, with his renderings from Alcaeus and Sappho—even as he disparaged it.

Ivanov's younger contemporary and fellow-countryman Boris Pasternak was another such: first and foremost an original poet; only secondarily a translator, novelist, memoirist, and essayist. And Pasternak was similarly ambivalent towards translation as an activity. He did not go as far as Anna Akhmatova, who claimed the russifying of alien verse as fatal to true creativity, "like eating your own brain." But Pasternak was always saying that he found it irksome, that he ought to drop it and do some "real work." And he, too, persistently neglected his own advice—to the point where translation was perhaps his chief literary activity, as it was surely his chief source of income, over a period of two decades from the early 1930s onwards. Throughout the 1940s he was heavily engaged in putting eight of Shakespeare's plays into Russian: the tragedies *Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Antony and Cleopatra, Othello, King Lear* and *Macbeth*; and also *Henry the Fourth*, Parts One and Two. These renderings have now supplied Anna Kay France of the State University of New York at Buffalo with the theme for her study, *Boris Pasternak's Translations of Shakespeare.*[1]

HERS IS A TECHNICAL TREATISE triumphantly refuting what I had come to suspect, that younger American academics in the Russian field have to squirt out the ink of jargon like squids whenever they put pen to paper. Here is nothing syncretic, syntagmatic, polysemous or polystructured. On the contrary, all is authority, elegance and clarity, the evidence being courteously examined, presented and judged in a graceful production on which both the author and the University of California Press may be congratulated.

As this study reminds us, scholarship need not be dull and pompous. And it further reminds us that the translator's profession presented three peculiar features in Stalin's Russia—features differentiating it from conditions familiar in the West and capable of daunting even that emperor of poet-translators Ezra Pound. Firstly, and surely most unnervingly of all, Soviet Russian translators of poetry were adequately paid. Secondly, their tolerably lucrative—and ultimately State-sponsored—translation contracts were in the gift of bureaucrats who included failed writers and other assorted nonentities. And, finally, such contracts tended to remain accessible to those writers who, without having been politically disgraced to the point where they had to be totally silenced, arrested or exterminated, had blotted their copy-books sufficiently to have the publication of their original work suspended.

[1] *Boris Pasternak's Translations of Shakespeare.* By ANNA KAY FRANCE. University of California Press, $18.00, £10.00.

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PASTERNAK HAD BEEN relegated to that limbo by the late 1930s, after a few years earlier in the decade when he had functioned as a wary and highly eccentric ally of Stalinism. A brief attempt had even been made to groom him as the dictatorship's poet laureate, but he had been delighted to be dropped from that role in favour of Mayakovsky; who, being dead, possessed the supreme advantage, from the authorities' point of view, that any conceivable sentiment could be attributed to him without the risk of its being contradicted.

Meanwhile Pasternak was attracting official displeasure by such acts of indiscipline as failing to sign a collective letter applauding the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky and his fellow generals. But he was far from suffering total proscription like his contemporary Osip Mandelstam—virtually denied all publication for several years before his final arrest and liquidation. Being only semi-outlawed, Pasternak retained his Moscow flat and his country house, and was able to support himself fairly comfortably by rendering foreign verse into Russian. He had been doing so for some years before he tackled Shakespeare wholesale, working on a variety of German and English poets; he also rendered not a few Georgians—through a line-by-line crib, for he did not speak their tantalising tongue.

PASTERNAK DID KNOW English (he knew German better), but on the occasions when I met him in the late 1950s he modestly confined himself to speaking his native Russian. In any case his chief credentials for translating Shakespeare were poetic rather than narrowly linguistic. Here he was equipped magnificently indeed, especially as he was not one poet but two.

There is proto-Pasternak, the difficult, tortuous, splendidly dynamic and imaginative lyricist of the late 1910s and early 1920s, who was lustily cracking nature's moulds, incarnadining multitudinous seas *et cetera* on his own account long before he turned to *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. Pasternak once wrote of the inward and outward "chaos" of Shakespeare's verse, adding that the poetry's potency consisted in "its quality of sketchiness, unrestrained and scattered about in disorder." Though this is what Pasternak wrote about Shakespeare he could have used the very same words to describe the lyrics that he himself wrote up to the age of 35 and beyond.

Deutero-Pasternak, by contrast—as represented by his original lyrics of the 1940s and 1950s—is a writer of monumental and almost deafening simplicity, a master of the laconic, condensed, yet tensely emotional statement. As such he is an ideal conveyor of the wide-ranging Shakespeare's less effusive moments: "*Pray you, undo this button*"; "*Put out the light, and then put out the light*"; not to mention the line of lines "*To be or not to be: that is the question.*"

THESE, BRIEFLY, were Pasternak's potentialities, and he realised them well enough for his eight Shakespeare plays to become standard stage versions in Russia. It need hardly be said that they have also provoked intemperate ecstasies in the West, where poor Pasternak has long been generating automatic eulogies almost by spontaneous combustion. It is the merit of Anna France's book that she takes an equable, scholarly and objective—yet wholly sympathetic—view of this emotion-infested field. She also enables one to see why, as I have always believed, Pasternak's admittedly impressive renderings of Shakespeare—solid, sound, honest, professional work if ever there was such a thing—yet fall disappointingly short of the Russian poet's immense potential, and even shorter of the Bard's realised achievement. The trouble is that Shakespeare was almost exclusively translated by the judicious, the restrained, the middle-aged deutero-Pasternak, and that the dashing, youthful, undisciplined, frenetic proto-Pasternak was kept on too short a rein. Indeed, he was hardly allowed out of his stable—an image that I hope to be forgiven since other poets were always comparing him to a mettlesome young horse.

For a variety of reasons this cautious policy was, broadly speaking, the correct one. Shakespeare is a difficult writer whose poetry triumphantly carries his English hearers over its own hurdles. But no foreign audience is going to stand for that amount of surging anfractuosity in its own language. Least of all would such unseemliness have been tolerated in Stalin's Russia, where the thesis that art must be intelligible to the common man was even enforced—by no means as a last resort—through the death penalty. There is also the fact that Russian words have on average (as Anna France points out) nearly twice as many syllables as English words, and that any translator trying to cram in Shakespeare's full meaning will not only fail, but will end up with a text nearly twice as long.

PASTERNAK'S POLICY of simplifying was well-founded, then, and there are many places where his Russian equals, or even surpasses, Shakespeare's English; these are especially common where the original is furthest from the sesquipedalian. But he went too far, and he did not always simplify with optimal force and elegance. This emerges vividly from some of the meteorological and scenic material in *Lear*.

When Shakespeare's King exclaims "*You*

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cataracts and hurricanoes, spout", Pasternak gives us the bald *Ley, dozhd, kak iz vedra*: "Pour rain, as from a bucket." I know that *iz vedra* is an idiom, and that the Russian does not sound nearly as banal as my back-translation deliberately makes it; even so the phrase is spectacularly ill-chosen. Then again, a line or two below, Shakespeare's *Sulphurous and thought-executing fires,/Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts*" have been reduced to "Arrows of lightnings, swift as thought,/Tree-splintering." The Russian is again somewhat more limp than the original, even if it does pick up—a little too much, perhaps—on "*Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world!*" with *V lepyoshku splyusni vypuklost vselennoy*: "Squash to pancake [or poppadum?] universe's convexity."

Here, to consolidate the point with a less rumbustious instance, is not the Shakespeare of the "*Murmuring surge,/That on th'unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes*", but he whose "waves" merely "break with noise on stones." Pasternak's *s shumom* is, again, not as flat as "with noise"; but it is almost as feeble as the padding *malenkiye*, "little", a line or two above, which makes his fishermen, discerned at the bottom of the beetling cliff, appear "Like little mice" instead of "*Like mice.*"

PASTERNAK "NEVER FAILS LEAR", one English critic has maintained. Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!

And this enfeeblement of Shakespeare's storms and seas comes from a Russian poet who practically invented rain and thunder, being probably the *wettest* writer—in a literal and strictly honourable sense—who ever dipped his pen; we need look no further than the lyric beginning "*February! Fetch ink and weep!*" And what a contrast the *Lear* passage as a whole forms with the febrile thunderings of Pasternak's youth: with his storm that "doffs its hat and takes a hundred blinding snapshots"; or with the other one that

> *Rushes, reverberates in gloom and silver. . .*
> *Up stairs, on to porch.*
> *A step, a step, a step—blindfold needed!*
> *All five mirrors show the storm*
> *That has ripped off its mask.*

I see almost comparable feebleness in the rendering of "*Is this a dagger that I see before me*" as "Whence art thou dagger, having materialised [or *popped up*, or *cropped up*] in the air before me?" Nor can I see why it should be "like embers" instead of "like a burnished throne" that Cleopatra's barge "burns on the water." There are times when one feels that Pasternak's dame must have been a lame, tame crane.

ANYONE CAN MOCK a translator like this, but I hope that these details—selected in order to make a difficult point in shorthand, and on which contrary opinions might be expressed—will do more than prove Pasternak the translator to have absented himself from felicity from time to time. That matters little. The main point is a general one, and I think it irrefutable: compelled by the logic of circumstances to reduce his Shakespeare, Pasternak tended to cut him down rather more than was strictly necessary.

ALAS, POOR BORIS! The taming of the Bard is extended to sexual references. It is no use seeking here the Russian for the rank sweat of an enseamed bed: Pasternak's bed is just greasy and crushed. In the same passage from *Hamlet*, Shakespeare's "reechy" kisses and "bloat" King have both been stripped of their adjectives, as if the wretched Claudius were a Stalin whose pockmarks had to be eliminated from his photographs before he could be put before the public.

Though this prudish low-profiling of things rank and gross in nature is consistent with official Soviet practice, which abhors the indecorous, Anna France adduces evidence suggesting that Pasternak himself pioneered such emasculations, and did not have them forced upon him by authority. In any case the effect is to reduce the potentialities for sensuality in references to Juliet, Ophelia, and Desdemona. They have not been changed out of recognition—all this is a matter of shading, not of crude distortion—but they have been made to conform more closely with Pasternak's ideal young woman: a pure, pliant, featureless, docile creature, if not quite a "Lara" or a "Tonya" from *Doctor Zhivago*.

Pasternak also infuses into his Shakespeare his own eagerly affirmative attitude to "life" (his favourite word), thus softening the English dramatist's pervasive insistence on humanity's capacity for evil. This gives us, for example, somewhat too mild an Iago, while the treatment of Hamlet, as one inspired by a selfless devotion to duty, again involves a traceable divergence from the angle of the original—a mere deviation, let it again be clear, not a flagitious travesty. This same idealising attitude was later to be triumphantly embodied in Pasternak's original lyric "Hamlet", the first of the poems appended to *Doctor Zhivago*.

RIGHTLY ADMIRED though the "Hamlet" poem is, I could wish that the very different treatment of the same Prince of Denmark by Pasternak's contemporary Marina Tsvetayeva were equally well-known—even though it departs much further from Shakespeare's. In a sequence of three devastating

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onslaughts the free-swinging Marina scornfully denounces the hero later to be idealised by her colleague, and for officiously and incestuously trying to interfere in his mother's sex life.

Misogynist! . . . Prince Hamlet! Mixture of chalk and corruption,
Stop defiling the Queen's secret places.
Lust can't be judged by virgins.

As for Hamlet's claim to have loved Ophelia more than forty thousand brothers, Tsvetayeva contemptuously adds: "*But less than one lover! . . .*"

Here was a Russian poet with fire in her belly to ignite the Avon. But so had the early, the less delicately laconic proto-Pasternak, who could break up the ice in a Russian river in a way that brings the Globe Theatre within range of the bell-tower of Ivan Veliky.

Bellowing butchery of floating floes,
Dagger-fight of débris . . .
Wheeze, anguished clanks, knives' clatter,
Gnashings, chewings, clashing chunks.

Hammy or even Webster-like though it may sound in English, the original, with its *Stalkivayushchikhsya glyb / Skrezheshchushchiye perezhovy* is the very stuff of what a Russian Shakespeare needs—in the appropriate passages, of course. Had Pasternak only been willing to reach back into the arsenal of his youth, his loons and his Banquos might have become the very quiddity of the cream-faced and the blood-boltered, while his cataracts and hurricanes might have spouted all hell out of themselves instead of obediently slopping out of their pail on cue.

They are pretty plays, Boris Leonidovich . . . .

The Rostrum

Too tall for a prie-dieu
and too small for a sentry box,

though knocked together from plain,
straightforward and equally smooth planks of phrases

it has stopped halfway
between
the humility of prayer
and the haughty intimation
of the sentry's password,
and it compels
the adoption of a posture
halfway between
genuflection
and standing to attention;

in other words
the weight of the body
rests on the palms
or on the elbows
and the legs
freed from their normal duty
can freely jerk in a servile ecstasy
or bend under the burden of lies
or shake in terror:

this is why the rostrum was invented,
to screen it all
discreetly
from our eyes.

Stanislaw Baranczak
Translated by Antony Graham

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NOTES & TOPICS

European Diary

"Russian" (good), "Soviet" (bad). . . .

Zurich

NO, the passage is not from an Intourist visitor:

"One is given a welcome in this country, but the politeness is so burdensome that the observer is quite unable to get about to look at anything by himself. Never being alone to examine and ponder makes it difficult to come to any independent judgments, and that is what one is after. The Russians are convinced of the efficiency of the lie. Not that their spirit is lacking in sensitivity or insight, but in a country where not even the rulers have any feeling for the virtues of freedom, not even for themselves, there the governed must needs keep aloof from the obvious dangers of candour. . . . The profession of 'foreign mystification' is a very Russian one."

To be sure, it could have been a useful text for all those naive Olympic tourists; but actually the context was Marquis de Custine's Czarist Russia of the early 19th century. Has nothing changed since 1839? His description of the far-reaching controls over all aspects of life, of the suspicion and secrecy concerning the slightest social details, of the utter absence of what in the West could be thought of as public political life; the whole of Custine's book has been a treasure-trove of quotations for a long time now, all apparently suggesting the unshakeable historical continuity between the Old and the New Russia.

One can hardly avoid thinking of de Custine when Solzhenitsyn, in his latest article in *Foreign Affairs*, posits an absolute opposition between all that is quintessentially Russian and the whole spirit and structure of the Soviet Union, indeed writing that the present holders of power over an honest, noble, deeply Christian and kindly native population are really a kind of foreign Occupation power. He argues that it has become a life-and-death matter for the West to learn to comprehend the difference between an enslaved but slowly awakening people and this imposed coercive system from without . . . with which no coexistence is at all possible.

THIS IS, as I say, an old argument, taking on new forms in our own day. Is the Soviet régime more backward, less capable of forward development than the old Czarist Russia which had liberal tendencies ever since Catherine the Great? Or, put another way, is this régime so identified with the banal modern notion of progressive political change that the very suggestion of a comparison with the *ancien régime* must raise hackles on decent liberal spirits? Or, again (for there is the old third hypothesis), is there a continuity between old and new?

Solzhenitsyn, the great Witness to Russian agonies and the thunderer against Western decadence (which includes much of our democratic ways and press liberties), is a man of polarisation. He demands—and gets—an all-or-nothing reaction. His faithful believers, and not a few among his millions of readers, follow him totally; and for recent critical remarks of my own one reader reminded me sharply, "Solzhenitsyn has always been right. . . ." Others are irritated to outbursts of hostile analysis of "the egocentric manipulation of his fame and unique literary energies." One psychiatrist remarked to me recently, "Can't you see that the man is sanctimonious."

What one can see is the conventional difficulty in accepting the honesty and integrity of extraordinary men who throw strange and disagreeable ideas at us. Solzhenitsyn is a very special phenomenon of our time, and apart from one book on the subject—George Nivat's recent study, published in Paris (Editions du Seuil)—I wouldn't know what to advise readers to turn to in order to get behind the superficialities of much of the discussion. Somewhere in his book called *The Yawning Heights*, Alexander Zinoviev (who in his satirical coolness, without pathos or fury, is poles away from Solzhenitsyn's spirit) writes, "One should not judge him too strictly. He grew in loneliness. Criticism and adoration are just too partisan. . . ."

For Solzhenitsyn, the rise of Bolshevism was from the very outset an "Invasion." It came from elsewhere, from the outside, was imposed. But Zinoviev, on the other hand, remembers how his grandmother used to keep a picture of Stalin in the pages of her old Bible. . . .

A CENTURY AGO the Slavophiles despised everything that came from the West as unholy

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imports, as corrupting elements of the authentic Russian spirit. In the raging discussions of that day one liberal named Chicherin (not to be confused with Lenin's associate) protested energetically against the belief in a noble peasant folk.

> "They want to convince me that the peasants, among whom I live and whom I have known since my childhood, represent the highest human ideals. This seems to me to be utter nonsense. The man of Russian Enlightenment, Peter, is presented now as a corrupter of popular integrity and against him the feeble-minded Fedor Ivanovich becomes an ideal Czar who never missed a church service and actually rang out the bells himself. . . ."

There can be no doubt that there were genuine successes which the spirit of Russian Liberalism was able to register in Russia; old institutions were reformed, new social and economic arrangement introduced; from Count Witte onwards there was even a kind of "great leap forward." But once the violent Revolution came out of the ruins of World War I, nothing remained of the liberal heritage. For Solzhenitsyn, there is only one (and a very simple one at that) way of reading history; and he goes to great and angry lengths to polemicise against the American historian Richard Pipes for having discerned traditional Russian traits within the Soviet system.[1]

The paradox is, obviously, that the Soviet rulers, despite changes of party line and dialectical vocabulary, always insist on the one and true version of the past; and now even from the stony Yankee hills of Vermont comes a call for an authentic dogma of historical interpretation.

Nor is he alone. The Editor of *Kontinent*, the exiled Soviet novelist Vladimir Maximov, refers to Western democracy and Totalitarianism as "two dead-end streets", and in his own projected Constitution (*Kontinent* No. 14) he forbids trade unions to have any kind of "central organisation." Whether old or new, illiberalism doesn't change very much.

AT ANY RATE, the bitter and heated debates all round these themes have been with us before, and perhaps here too we can make out the element of "Russian continuity." Like de Custine we are still on the outside looking in, puzzling, pondering, worried whether we will have a free quiet moment to make up our own minds. Meanwhile, we keep on taking our battering: what must be done, why we have done it all wrong, where we absolutely have to take our stand, if the most sombre of destinies is to be avoided. It is probably all for the best that we listen patiently to the great Russian debate, and follow it feelingly. The dialectical hair-splitting of the various Marxist groups which used to dominate the arid arguments over the "Russian Question" turned out to have dramatic historic implications, even beyond the deaths of Mao and Tito. Ideas have consequences.

François Bondy

[1] See, in ENCOUNTER, Richard Pipes' critique of Solzhenitsyn (June 1979); and the whole debate on this subject between Pipes and a young Soviet historian, W. G. Krasnow (ENCOUNTER, April 1980).

The Russian Battle for Kafka

Who's Afraid of Big Bad Franz?

THE HISTORY OF Kafka in the Soviet Union is even more kafkaesque than his work. The Russian adventures of the author of *The Castle* remind one of the fate of the hero of that novel. Just as the land surveyor K. could never overcome the force which debarred him from entering the castle, Kafka has not quite managed up till now to break the resistance of the Apparat which protects the ideological integrity of Soviet art. The vast majority of Russian readers are not familiar with his work, and the commentaries of Russian critics are meditations against rather than about Kafka. That does not mean, however, that opinions of his work have not changed over the years.[1] In the official aversion to Kafka, one can distinguish shades of colour and even glimpses of light.

Kafka's name, well known in the 1920s (in a way the "Golden Age" of Soviet literary criticism), submerged in the following decades. In 1965 the first (and up-till-now, the only) selection of Kafka's works appeared in Moscow. In the same year two books came out which dealt critically with Kafka's work; I refer to D. W. Zatonsky's *Franz Kafka and The Question of Modernism* and W. Dnieprov's *Outlines of the Twentieth-century Novel*; in addition there are several shorter works, among which the essay "Franz Kafka" by E. Knipowich is noteworthy. The Kafka selection consists of two

[1] See, for a previous report, Hans Mayer & François Bondy, "The Struggle of Kafka & Joyce", ENCOUNTER, May 1964.

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parts; one containing *The Trial*, the second some 40 stories and parables. The anthology, over 600 printed pages, is well put together, and even the quality of the translations leaves little to be desired. Nevertheless, the book is a curiosity.

Contrary to the accepted and meticulously observed regulations in the USSR, there is no mention in the book of the size of the edition. Everything else (the date of publication and of copyright, the quality of the paper, the address of the printer) is registered, only the size of the printing remains a secret. Obviously it was so small that the publishers preferred to keep quiet about it. An edition such as this one is called a "*prohibitiv*" edition in the Eastern bloc countries. The book is available, but it is not to be had anywhere.

The second even greater curiosity is the preface by Boris Suchkov. It has only one purpose: to persuade the reader not to read the book. The Russian "Kafka" anthology is the only book I know which informs its readers at the very beginning that reading the book is a sheer waste of time. Over more than 60 pages Suchkov tries to prove Kafka's work is utterly devoid of any literary value, not to mention its serious ideological dangers.

"The schematic existential and emotional world of Josef K.", Suchkov observes in passing, apropos of *The Castle*,

> "is not only to be explained by the fact that Kafka, who as a writer is a great egocentric, lacks all powers of psychological analysis and has no gift for entering into other people's minds and into emotional worlds different from his own. The cause also lies in the schematic nature of his thinking, in the inclination towards a simple, wooden portrayal of life and human relationships, which was also a characteristic of Expressionist poetry."

The final verdict sounds like a literary death-sentence:

> "This schematic representation of life prevented Kafka from understanding the actual sources of the friction between man and a society based on private property, and therefore the view of life that emerges from his work is monotonous and devoid of content."

Is there really any point in concerning oneself with Kafka if he is such an insignificant writer? Zatonsky answers this question in the course of his controversial debate with an Albanian critic:

> "In the columns of the Albanian newspaper *Drita*, indignation was expressed over the fact that at a Moscow academic conference the speakers dared to analyse the works of such decadent writers as Kafka. Such a dogmatic and 'uncompromising' attitude can only draw an ironic smile from any reasonable thinking person. In order to understand literature, one must be acquainted with history in all its manifestations—close and distant, healthy and infirm. . . ."

ZATONSKY JUSTIFIES the interest of Russian criticism in Kafka by giving prophylactic-medicinal reasons. Just as a doctor does not merely study the normal functions of the human organism, so the critic also examines both the anatomy and the pathology of literature. Zatonsky's dispute with the Albanian comrade suggests the gradation of aesthetic doctrine in the Eastern camp. In Moscow and East Berlin Roger Garaudy, Ernst Fischer, and Eduard Goldstücker are renegades; Zatonsky, in turn, is considered decadent in Tirana.

KAFKA has only found one supporter amongst the Soviet critics: Dnieprov. His book on the 20th-century novel towers above other works (Suchkov, Zatonsky, Knipowich) and is basically the only ray of light in the sea of darkness which surrounds Kafka in Russia. Dnieprov, who has read widely in modern Western literature, reacts to works of art with far greater sensibility and has a conspicuously more delicate touch than

Caricature of Kafka, drawn by himself

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his thick-skinned colleagues. Where they wield the axe, he plies the scalpel. He in no way disguises his admiration for Kafka and regards him as an original writer.

> "Kafka's heroes become to a certain extent abstractions, lose their individual character and share a single relationship to life. But in the framework of this relationship Kafka strives to achieve a complexity which gives us the impression that his images are all-embracing. Kafka's abstract and fantastic symbolism is combined with a methodical fullness of representation. . . ."

The desire to preserve 19th-century realism forever is—according to Dnieprov—the main source of Soviet misinterpretations and difficulties. Dnieprov attacks the dogma which has given precedence to the Stanislavsky method in the theatre, to the techniques of Tchaikovsky in music, and to the style of Tolstoy in literature.

In spite of everything the view of Kafka would not be so disparaging if he had not turned his back on "realism." For the sake of realism the Russians have forgiven Thomas Mann for being preoccupied with decadence and death, and Hemingway for his heroic despair. But the fear remains that violations of the sacred taboo could pave the way for an even greater unorthodoxy, for a rejection of Socialist realism. It is with this very heresy that Suchkov begins his introduction to the Kafka anthology.

The opening sentence is ominous: "Franz Kafka, whose tragic works have assimilated many moods and ideas characteristic of bourgeois consciousness, is quite rightly a central figure among the artists who have broken with the realistic tradition in our own century." Zatonsky had also reproached Kafka for the same deviation. In the course of his comments on "The Metamorphosis"—which incidentally sound unintentionally humorous—he criticises Kafka for his aversion to reality and to realism: "An insect man—that is no longer a generalisation of reality (although it may perhaps have seemed so to the author). An insect man is a flight from reality. . . ."

All three (Suchkov, Zatonski, and Knipowich) contrast Thomas Mann as a realistic writer with the author of *The Castle*. Soviet criticism was never able to resist the appeal of Thomas Mann's prose, not least because the influence of the Russian 19th-century novel is so perceptible in his work. That sort of epic writing is appreciated in Russia on account of its narrative qualities, especially when it appeals to the "ethical sensibility" of the reader.

If the Soviet theorists easily reach the conclusion that Kafka was not a realist, they have a few problems when it comes to deciding what he actually was. Suchkov links him with "symbolism", on another occasion with the "Expressionist school" (and thereby makes him responsible for all its defects). In his opinion, Kafka adopted the poetics and the style of Expressionism, the language of which, as he goes on to explain, "is ecstatic and suited to the portrayal of extraordinary situations." Suchkov does not take the trouble to explain how the calm, dry narrative style of Kafka with its almost "official" tone is to be reconciled with this ecstatic language.

Zatonsky, in turn, numbers Kafka among the "Modernists", though what he means by this is so nebulous that it can mean anything. He designates Modernism as "unrealistic" and condemns it to all eternity as "the product of an anarchist, restless, discordant spirit, which sometimes senses the decay of capitalism, but is already infected by its poison waste and is therefore inclined to reject everything. . . ."

WHAT IS MOST DISTURBING about the Russian interpretation of Kafka is its ideological stubbornness, couched in a pseudo-scientific language. If we really have to use the term "alienation", then it is to be found above all in this *lingua horribilis* in which (to use Kafka's words) "the consonants grate tinnily against one another." In order to illustrate the ossification of this method, a few examples.

In his commentary on "The Judgment" Suchkov defends the view that the key to this story is to be sought in the conflict between Father and Son (who wants to acquire his father's fortune): "This situation is typical of bourgeois morals and of the relationships within the bourgeois family." But then, seized by the doubt whether the story is actually all to do with money, Suchkov reproaches the author for having distorted the meaning of the work with absurd ideas which "veil the character of the conflict between father and son." From the same standpoint Suchkov takes exception to "The Metamorphosis", for the metamorphosis has removed Gregor Samsa from the domain of the class struggle against his father and "therefore any criticism of the bourgeois family is hardly noticeable."

The Trial is generally interpreted by the Soviet critics as a clash between the Individual and the Capitalist system. "Josef K. initially tries to fight for his legal and human rights . . .", as Knipowich writes, and opposes "the terrible machine of this bureaucratic, bourgeois court." Suchkov also regards the court as "a mystified conception of the bourgeois administration of justice, on which rest the pillars of capitalist society." In this way a high-ranking bank official, who spends his free evenings in a beer cellar, becomes a Fighter against Capitalism and ultimately its Victim.

Even more remarkable things happen in *The Castle*. Here Soviet criticism lays the blame for all

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the sins which it has forgiven the Bank Clerk on the Land Surveyor. "In actual fact", says Suchkov, "the land surveyor capitulates in the face of life and comes to terms with his inhumanity and cruelty. . . ." Zatonsky judges the hero of the novel even more harshly: "He does not grapple with the castle, he only fights so that the castle will acknowledge and accept him. He is a deserter who summons up the remains of his will-power and crawls over the shell-scarred earth to the enemy emplacements so that their bullets do not get him. . . ." Zatonsky completes this scathing criticism with a remark full of indignation: "In the novel *The Castle* Kafka portrays man as particularly mean and helpless. . . ."

Knipowich on the other hand, a little more indulgently, sees in the fight of the Land Surveyor with the Castle authorities "the will to fight for justice and work, the fear of being proletarianised, of being thrust down into the class of 'pariahs' and 'rebels'. . . ." K. as a victim of the fear of being proletarianised—quite a new, if not altogether unexpected hypothesis.

THE RUSSIAN CRITICS blithely overlook all the contradictions which characterise the Court and the Castle and are apparently content to leave it up to the bourgeois commentators to resolve them. Basically they adopt—what an irony!—the method of Max Brod (Kafka's old friend whom they stubbornly oppose), but with the familiar "dialectical" difference (see: Marx, see: Hegel), they turn it on its head. Brod insisted on the "positive features" of Court and Castle, in order to establish the *divine* authority of both mysterious administrations. The Russians do the opposite. They stress the "negative" characteristics of both, in order to unmask their ugly capitalist face.

Roman Karst

Judges & Brothers

London

IN HIS ESSAY "On Judicature", Francis Bacon insisted that "The place of justice is an hallowed place; and therefore not only the bench, but the foot-pace and precincts thereof, ought to be preserved without scandal and corruption. . . ." Bacon proved himself incapable of obeying this principle—he was, in 1621, convicted of taking bribes in the performance of his duties as Lord Chancellor and was imprisoned and fined.

In more recent times, two developments have ensured that the English court is "an hallowed place." First, no English judge has, for over two centuries, been guilty of corruption in the performance of his judicial duties. Secondly, and disturbingly, the judiciary has been removed from the battleground of debate by the secrecy of judicial administration and the privacy of judicial personnel. Appointments to the bench are announced as a *fait accompli*, with little, if any, public discussion of the merits of the candidates. Judicial personalities and attitudes strongly influence the exercise of the discretionary powers of the judge; but those characters and attitudes remain private. We know virtually nothing about the mechanics of judicial law-making in the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords. Judicial foibles are rarely discussed in public; at best, the Lord Chancellor will have a quiet word in the ear of the pompous, bullying, or loquacious judge. *Pas devant les litigants.*

It is doubtful whether a repetition of the lunacy of Mr Justice Stephen on the late 19th-century bench, or the severe financial problems and suicide of Mr Justice McCardie in 1933 would today be concealed from the public. But it remains true that courts are—by virtue of journalistic inertia (plus an unjustified fear of the law of contempt of court) and the complacency of lawyers—preserved not merely "without scandal and corruption" but also without debate as to their administration and activities.

A new American book, *The Brethren*,[1] is a major breach in the fortress of secrecy and privacy. Abuses of confidence by law-clerks, and information provided by unnamed Justices have enabled the authors to construct detailed descriptions of the adjudicative process on the American Supreme Court 1969-75, the personalities and defects of the judges and their mutual antipathies. The book is written in the standard American journalese that allows no room for good writing and credits the authors with a superhuman degree of perspicacity. The inelegance of the style and the descents into bad taste (particularly the cheap jibes at Justice Harlan, blind in hospital suffering from terminal cancer) presage and reflect the equivocal ethics of the authors and the judicial iniquity, impropriety, and incompetence revealed by the substance of the text. The "Brethren" struggle in vain to understand the legal issues presented to them, reach unprincipled decisions for extraneous personal or political reasons, and spend much of their time deriding Chief Justice Burger for his ignorance and ineptitude. Such is the inadequacy of the judicial personnel portrayed that one is reminded of the unhappy and unsuccessful attempt of Senator Roman Hruska to defend Nixon's nomination of the ill-qualified Judge G. Harrold Carswell to the Supreme Court: "Even if he is mediocre there are a

[1] *The Brethren*. By BOB WOODWARD & SCOTT ARMSTRONG, Secker & Warburg, £7.95.

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lot of mediocre judges and people and lawyers. They are entitled to a little representation, aren't they, and a little chance?. . ."

These revelations are surprising and disturbing only because they relate to contemporary judges. We are well accustomed to the idea that judges of all previous generations had their vices—and every current defect alleged and examined by the authors is familiar to any student of the judiciary. But the myth of the Judge as legal superman makes us reluctant to concede that today's judge is a mere mortal. As Harold Laski once wrote to Mr Justice Holmes, "I wish that people could be persuaded to realise that judges are human beings; it would be a real help to jurisprudence. . . ."

The Brethren does hint at some of the problems of judicial administration. How are judges appointed? Nixon interviewed Harry Blackmun before nominating him. The President was (we are told) less concerned with Blackmun's legal abilities than with ensuring that none of Blackmun's daughters were "hippie types." How do judges cope with the burdens of decision-making and what training do they need? Mr Justice Powell (we are told) was tortured by the issue of the constitutionality of capital punishment, and felt that his practice as a lawyer had ill-prepared him for making such fundamental decisions. To what extent should a judge maintain judicial virtues out of court? Mr Justice Harlan declined to vote in Presidential elections, and never even applauded at a President's "State of the Union" address, in order to preserve the image of impartiality. Should judges remain silent out of court, or should they emulate Mr Justice Douglas who, in 1972, gave an hour-long interview to CBS television?

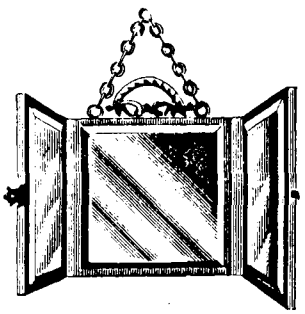
THE BOOK PROVIDES inadequate answers to the important questions it raises, preferring to perpetuate gossip and rumour, most of it unsubstantiated. But those defenders of judicial virtue angered by *The Brethren* should remember that gossip and rumour gain credence when information is unavailable to feed the public appetite. The very secrecy of contemporary judicial administration gives value to the revelations of the authors. In England, this reluctance to allow open government to permeate the Lord Chancellor's department and the Appellate Committee derives partly from fear that the legal system cannot survive without a surfeit of mysticism, and partly from a well-understood balance of convenience for judges and administrators. If nothing is known about judicial administration, difficult questions cannot be asked. Or as "Trotters" Harris suggests to Nell and her grandfather in *The Old Curiosity Shop*: "Would you care a ha'penny for the Lord Chancellor if you know'd him in private and without his wig? Certainly not. . . ."

A good book on the judiciary and its activities is the entitlement of all litigants. *The Brethren* is, alas, not that essential work, but it is a valuable and entertaining, if partisan and factoid, chapter in the struggle to reveal the intimate secrets of the judiciary to those it exists to serve. For all its inadequacies, *The Brethren* is a rare antidote to the self-congratulatory, uncritical ethic that so insidiously pervades the legal profession. Legal journalism and legal biographies rigorously eschew gossip and rarely breach the conventions of the club. There is a customary Judicial Secrets Act, a moratorium period of 30 years only after the expiry of which is it permissible to discuss the inadequacies of those who have long since handed down their final judgments. The immunity of the English judge from the balm (or the poison, depending on your point of view) of the investigative journalist cannot much longer continue. How much better to forestall gossip and rumour by fact and informed discussion on this important area of British government. To return to Francis Bacon, he also suggested that judges are "lions under the throne." It is time for those lions to come out into the open where they can be more closely observed.

David Pannick

A Confusion of Fellows

London



ON 3 JULY 1980 the Annual General Meeting of the British Academy had before it a recommendation from Council: that Professor Anthony Blunt should be expelled. The ground on which Council proposed the expulsion was that for many

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SIR KENNETH DOVER, President of the British Academy, will add his comments in our November issue.

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years Professor Blunt had acted as an intelligence agent for Soviet Russia and thus was a traitor to his country.

An alternative motion placed before the meeting proposed that the Academy "deplore" Blunt's activities but take no further action. After some debate the meeting accepted by 120 votes to 42 a motion from the floor "to proceed to the next business." The Academy thus left Blunt in possession of the Fellowship and in no way dissociated itself from his actions.

During the following weeks three or four Fellows resigned in protest, and at least another four, of whom I was one, gave notice that they would resign at the end of the year if Blunt then still remained a Fellow. Faced with this evidence of discontent and dissension within the Academy, Blunt announced on 18 August that he had tendered his own resignation.

By this action Professor Blunt has taken a step of service to the Academy, and I do not wish to dwell on his particular case. But that case has raised issues of a more general kind which deserve consideration. There have been rumours of the possible future disclosure of another one or even two ex-members of the Blunt spy-group, who might or might not be members of the Academy. It is therefore meet that Fellows should in future have a much clearer idea of their normal obligations and priorities in such circumstances than it appears to me that many of them had on 3 July.

It is not possible to conjecture the reasoning in all cases which led some Academicians to vote as they did on that day. The chief indications of motive for following this line have been given to the press by Ralf Dahrendorf and A. J. P. Taylor. Dr Dahrendorf is reported as saying:

> "The British Academy is about scholarship and that was the decision we took by a handsome majority .... I don't think it is the Academy's business to take a decision on the conduct of its members outside the area of scholarship."

Mr Taylor observed:

> "It was just like McCarthy in America all over again. I believe in toleration, and I am a freedom man. It is a wonderful thing to realise that we can show patience and tolerance and that we can tolerate the intolerable."[1]

I am perfectly convinced that all the 120 Fellows in the July majority do in fact deplore treasonable behaviour, and I think some at least of them must regret that they were not able to put this on record. I am quite sure, also, that they cast their votes on the basis of absolute good faith. But I believe those votes were given without due consideration of the circumstances, that the reasoning behind them is fallacious, and that there was a lamentable failure to consider the implications.

Mr Taylor, rightly in my view, very implicitly referred to Blunt with the word "intolerable." If he holds that opinion, would he (if still a Fellow) have been prepared to sit down next to any Fellow whom he knew to have acted treasonably and talk amiable nothings with him over the next Academy dinner? I really cannot envisage it—but this is the sort of absurd and illogical position one reaches through the kinds of argument that have been used.

More serious, if a man of this kind is held worthy to be a Fellow, he is presumably worthy to be an officer of the Academy. Theoretically there is no reason why he should not be a member of Council, or even President. Did those of the 120 who voted with Mr Taylor, but who agree with him that anyone who has acted as a spy against the interests of his country is "intolerable", really give enough thought to this point? I find it difficult to believe that they would have so voted if they had done so; and yet this is the logical extrapolation of their decision.

It is said, nevertheless, that the sole concern of the Academy is scholarship, that if a man is fully qualified to be a Fellow in this respect, nothing else in his career matters. This, it seems to me, is a thoroughly shortsighted and irresponsible view.

The Academy is not a private society. It is based on a Royal Charter and it is charged with duties of fostering British scholarship and representing it in contact with foreign countries. Both for that reason and because it is entrusted with the disposal of public funds, it partakes of the nature of a public organisation; its activities are legitimately open to public scrutiny; and the members of the public have a right to expect that in setting standards for the conduct of its affairs it will at least not fall below their own. The British public does not expect the public organisations it supports to give countenance to those who have betrayed its interests.

IF THE VIEWS of the public are to be disregarded in such cases, what about the interests of the Academy itself? Is all that matters to it the fact that a man is an excellent scholar? Would the fact that he was a traitor and a Soviet agent be of no account to it? I cannot think so. If his treasonable activities were in the service of régimes which destroyed scholarship, then these arguments surely cannot hold.

The standards of scholarship which the Academy exists to support entail the pursuit of learning and knowledge by free enquiry, with neither fear nor favour, and an exercise of the most scrupulous integrity in the search for truth. Among

[1] *Daily Telegraph*, 4 July 1980, and less fully *The Times*, 4 July 1980.

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the ultimate and most essential purposes of the Academy are the preservation and promotion of civilised values.

Blunt during the best years of his life devoted his energies to the promotion of the Stalinist system, which was the very negation of these things—a system in which free enquiry was forbidden; truth was proscribed; lies were demanded; men of integrity were terrorised; those disapproved of by authority became non-persons; and the story of the past was distorted, perverted and falsely fabricated to fit the orthodoxies and purposes of men in political power. All these things were not "civilisation" but barbarism. If ever there was a case of *trahison des clercs* it was this. If the designs in which Blunt was involved had reached their extreme logical end, some Stalinist puppet would have come to wield power in Whitehall and the mission of the Academy would indeed have fallen on evil times.

For what was going on, I shall refer only to the disastrous intellectual-political tyranny imposed through Lysenko upon a whole generation of Soviet biologists.[2] For the worst that might have happened I hardly need to remind readers of George Orwell's *1984*. And I shall hazard a guess—though we may not know the answer for a century—that the intellectual servitude against which such scholars in central Europe as Dr Julius Tomin now have to struggle may have come about partly owing to the efforts of Blunt and his collaborators. The continued association of the Academy with the names of men of the stamp of Blunt would be as much an affront to them, or to Soviet scholars of integrity like Dr Sakharov, now in the toils of the system which Blunt played traitor to support, as it would be to men of learning everywhere. None of Dr Dahrendorf's special pleading can wipe away that fact.

[2] This notorious academic scandal was exposed, long before it ended, in *The Death of Science in Russia*, edited by C. Zirkle (Philadelphia, 1949). See also Zhores A. Medvedev, *The Rise and Fall of T. D. Lysenko* (English tr., 1969) and David Joravsky, *The Lysenko Affair* (Harvard, 1970).

THERE ARE CERTAIN basic human qualities—I trust I am not being old-fashioned in calling them virtues—which form an essential cement to civilised society. It is because our forefathers (apart from the inevitable few rogues among them) lived their lives generation after generation by these norms, that we in this country stand in the position we do today. They are: truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, honour, integrity. Without them no society, no nation (perhaps not even mankind) can survive. A man who betrays the secrets and the interests of his country fails the test of them all. By the vote of 3 July, Academicians have put themselves in the position of appearing to fail also; as Commander Horton has expressed it: "Most non-academics will draw from it the repellent conclusion that no crime, however heinous, will result in a bar from the inner circle of an élite and influential body" (*Daily Telegraph*, 6 August).

That, I believe, is something with which the Academy cannot in the long run live. What ensures the operation of the norms to which I have referred is a common standard of moral approval and moral revulsion. I do not think that academics as a class can demand that they be allowed to operate to a different standard. To do this is both to create the impression of arrogance and to withdraw from the real world into ivory towers. If that privilege were conceded to academics and then, as it would logically have to be, to other sectional interests, society would be on the path towards disintegration.

These are the principal reasons why I believe that it was a monstrous error of judgment on the part of the Academy not to dissociate itself in as decisive a manner as possible from a Fellow who had thus acted, in concealment, against the most essential principles for which it stands. The argument that "a man's career outside his academic work does not matter" is intellectually bankrupt and self-destructive. I am anxious that the Fellowship should not be led astray by it again. For if it were, I fear the public scandal which has been caused on this occasion would be a pallid flame compared with the blaze that would then result.

Ian R. Christie

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Pod-Persons & Sign-Systems

On Film Culture—By CHARLES BARR

THE LEAD ITEM in the London Diary of a recent *New Statesman* (4 July) concerned a story in the *Sun* newspaper:

> SHOCK PORN SHOW ON THE TAX-PAYER ran the headline above a piece about a pornography seminar organised by the Institute for Contemporary Arts in May. According to the *Sun* "more than 150 youngsters watched hard-core blue movies yesterday . . . at a show supported by the tax-payer." As the films shown included "three-in-a-bed sex, lesbianism, and orgies", shocking indeed. Unfortunately, however, it was not true. . . .

The NS explained how the seminar was restricted to over-18s, was centred on earnest academic analysis, and cost the tax-payer nothing. Recording the *Sun* editor's refusal to publish any correction, it presented the whole episode as "an example of the sensitive reporting for which his paper is justly famous."

A neat item, is it not?—calculated to leave the *New Statesman* and its readers feeling very superior. But shuffle through a few back numbers of the NS itself and you find curious precedents for this style of sensitive reporting of film topics. Exhibit A is a review (26 October 1979) by the magazine's film critic, John Coleman, of a trio of books about film stars. He uses one of these books—*Stars*, by Richard Dyer, Lecturer in Film Studies at Warwick University—as the basis for an attack on academic film study, on *Screen* magazine, and on the education service of the British Film Institute. Starting in these terms:

> Both versions of *Invasion of the Body-Snatchers* [a classic 1955 SF film, remade 1978] were about a small town whose inhabitants get taken over by "duplicates" from outer space. The analogy is irresistible. Most of the contributors to *Screen* magazine and, in varying degrees, such departmental writers as Dyer seem no longer accessibly human but, rather, pod-people, crammed with ill-digested Metz and Marx, emitting a computerised version of prose that bears only a tenuous relation to everyday language.

For the record, the remake of *Invasion* is set in the "small town" of San Francisco, but that's a minor point. A bit lower down, Coleman's token qualifying phrases ("most of . . . in varying degrees") have disappeared for good:

> What is so lowering is the knowledge that the number of students of film being indoctrinated—or "invaded"—by emissaries working out of the B.F.I. steadily increases. . . . *Stars*, alas, can fairly be taken as exemplifying the kind and quality of "proper theorisation" currently being promoted in places of higher learning.

Now there are three large ironies about Coleman's use here of the *Invasion of the Body-Snatchers* analogy:

(1) The comparison originated with another critic, Robin Wood, and the similarity of the context and the fact that Coleman had reviewed *Personal Views* on publication eliminate any doubt that this is his source. He has himself, then, been "invaded" by another, and speaks a parroted discourse.

(2) Mr Wood, when he drew the original analogy—comparing some film theorists and educationalists with "pod-people"—was himself working as a British Film Institute "emissary." In fact, he was the first person to be appointed to a B.F.I.-sponsored University lectureship (at Warwick). His polemic formed part of a live debate going on *within* academic film study, within B.F.I. Education, even within *Screen* magazine, and it's inaccurate of Coleman to present all this as a single monolithic bloc.

(3) He has chosen curious ground to fight on. If you have to pick a critic/teacher to represent the dehumanised pod-person, Dyer is an incredibly perverse choice. I can't *prove* this point like the first two, only point in the direction of Dyer's work in the two capacities.

The issues are not trivial, and it's not just John Coleman. Exhibit B is an equally wild spray of bullets fired by the distinguished film historian and film-maker Kevin Brownlow under the title "Cinematic Theology" (*New Statesman*, 25 January). He too creates an Aunt Sally in the form of a

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"closed circuit", an "exclusive brotherhood", an "inner sanctum", spouting an incomprehensible language of "Semiology and Related Jargon", and controlling all Higher Education in Film. And his article was the cue for further paranoia to emerge in the Letters column, like this from Derek Malcolm (15 February):

> Those who wish to start film courses [in Higher Education] invariably write to the B.F.I. for advice and help. The result is depressingly predictable—another down-the-line semiologist is trotted out for inspection and probable appointment.

This is, simply, grotesque; and, at the risk of wearying readers, I would like briefly to set the record straight.

MANY INSTITUTIONS have set up and continue to run Film Study courses without any British Film Institute connection. The closest connection is with those Universities, seven so far, where the B.F.I. has, through its Higher Education Grants Committee, sponsored a lectureship for a three-year period, in the hope that the University will thereafter establish the post and the subject. For these appointments the B.F.I. neither selects the candidates nor selects *from* them, but supplies one representative on a standard kind of panel. I speak with some knowledge since I was the fourth of these lecturers to be appointed, to initiate film studies at the University of East Anglia, and neither I nor any other candidate was a "down-the-line semiologist . . . trotted out" by the Institute. Exhibit C might, I suggest, be a set of books such as Robin Wood's *Personal Views*, *Film as Film* by V. F. Perkins (his successor in the Warwick post) and my own *Ealing Studios*: leaving questions of merit to one side, they are manifestly lucid, accessible, and un-jargon-ridden, and they come from the heartland of academic film studies (B.F.I.-sponsored division). Meanwhile, those beneficiaries (or emissaries) of the B.F.I. whose work has been more overtly theoretical and "difficult", such as Peter Wollen, John Ellis, and Richard Dyer himself, are absurdly caricatured if they are dismissed as obscurantist card-carriers, line-toers, or pod-persons. Indeed this whole group, if one can call it such, is considerably less homogeneous, less interchangeable, than are the pillars of our film journalism (Derek Malcolm, author of the letter quoted above, has of course for many years been Film Critic of *The Guardian*, though not for quite so many as John Coleman has been Film Critic of the *New Statesman*).

ELEVEN FILM BOOKS are jostling for review here, none of them, except for parts of one, written by anyone so far mentioned, but I don't think that preamble is irrelevant. Film books are produced, and read, not in a vacuum but within a certain climate of awareness, of knowledge and presuppositions—the common phrase is a "film culture"—which helps condition the ways in which the production and the reading are done. The dominant characteristic of our film (and TV) culture, in England anyway, is a strong separation between empiricism and theory, between common sense and analysis, between the journalistic and the educational (a less misleading term here than "academic"). Those who belong naturally somewhere in the middle, like Philip French or myself, seem to be pressured, by the mutual hostility of the camps, towards one or other pole. French, whose weekly *Observer* column is by a wide margin the most intelligent of current film journalism, felt impelled (in May 1978) to warn ENCOUNTER readers off this modern theoretical stuff, while I hereby come down on the other side.

Film is arguably the most complex and vivid of media and at the same time the most difficult to pin down, to investigate. The film experience is powerful physically and emotionally, and—largely through this—socially and ideologically. Yet coming out of a film is like waking from a dream. Rich and revealing ribbons of imagery blur in the memory. We have no equivalent of the musical score or literary text to turn back to; it's rare enough even to have dialogue scripts or skills, and these can seldom bring us very close to the *film*.

One critical response is to see no problem but simply to work, with whatever degree of tenacity, from the straight experience of the film, i.e. impressionistically. To quote John Coleman again (*New Statesman*, 25 February 1977):

> I tend to find film theory antipathetic if not downright foreign (as until recently most of it was), trusting rather to my reactions to the piece of art immediately before me and praying that words will come, through which I can usefully express them.

Clearly the argument here is not just about film criticism, but it's especially crucial for film, if only because the work is so far from being "immediately before" the critic as he writes.

Another response is to seek ways of gaining closer access to how particular films, and cinema generally, work upon us. This means the kind of systematic work that shades into theory; but then we all use theory even if unconsciously, just as we are all in the grip of ideologies: why not make theory articulate and examine how ideology operates? Semiology has become another dirty word, which is partly the fault of some who have used it as a banner, but it simply refers to the systematic study of a wider range of sign-systems than purely linguistic ones; since the cinema com-

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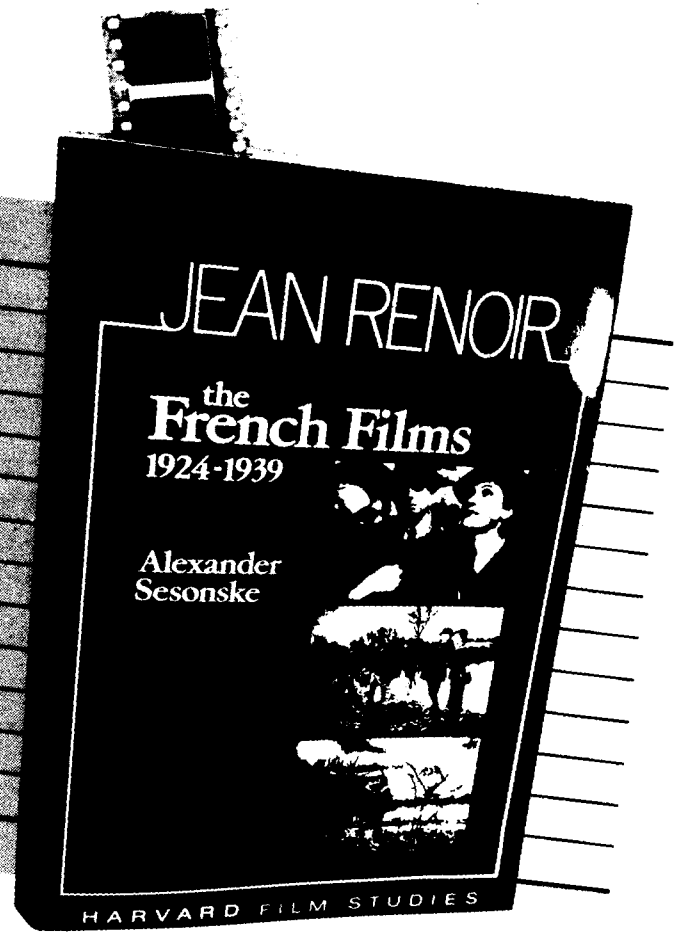

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municates by a multitude of signs that are not only, or primarily, linguistic, it seems a mere commonplace to observe that semiology has to be relevant to film study. Anyone who has analysed the systems of visual coding and cutting used in TV News, in interviewing, in football coverage, has been engaged, with a usefulness which surely no one would contest, in semiological work.

Another neglected truism. Most works of literary fiction have a single author, whose name is prominently displayed. Inside the book, or on the jacket, you expect to find a list of the author's other works. Even if these are not in print, it is usually possible to find them. In all these respects, film is very different.

The two distinctive factors about the medium that I have pointed to—two enormous "gaps"—create two natural functions (not the only ones, but very basic) for film books: to set out data, trace careers and trends, make the kind of sense out of the vast mass of film production that the industry does not do for us itself; and to supply insight into the *ways* in which films, in general and in particular, communicate.

The two functions are both complementary and interdependent. But in practice, at least within our film culture, they split apart, in line with the polarisation between empirical and theoretical, journalistic and educational (a word whose connotations I don't mean to be narrow ones, since education is not something that goes on solely in institutions).

THE FIRST OF THE two volumes of David Shipman's *The Great Movie Stars*[1] has been reissued in an updated version and at a greatly updated price. It deals with 181 stars of English-speaking (and/or silent) cinema whose names were made before, even if their careers continued after, World War II. Of its kind it is admirable, charting the careers of its subjects in an exhaustive, alert and readable way, but it's a perfect illustration of the big split. Obviously you can do wonders with selective quotations on a dust-jacket, but this really is the sort of book that appeals most strongly to our film journalists. Typically, John Coleman not only reiterates for the new edition his praise of the 1970 one, but uses it as a stick with which to beat Dyer's book on stars. And Shipman states in his Introduction:

> Elsewhere [i.e. outside the magazines] the cinema has not been lucky in its commentators. The majority of books on movies are riddled with errors. . . .

A dangerous ploy, for his own book is not devoid of factual errors, but more significant is the implication that facts, coverage, are everything. One notes from the blurb that he

> is currently trying to see *every* film made before 1950, and all the important ones made thereafter, for a giant history of world cinema, which he has been working on since 1972.

The spirit is that of Leslie Halliwell, author of those two popular and critical successes *The Film-Goer's Companion* and *Halliwell's Film Guide*, constructed on the principle of covering all the ground, assembling the facts, and leaving the perceptions to take care of themselves—they're either obvious, common-sense, or "personal" and thus hard to argue with. Critically, Shipman's book operates in the Halliwell manner, slotting each film and role into place with a neat label. This method makes it, as a book to read and learn from, wearyingly superficial, and Shipman's own taste in films and in genres leads him to deal most inadequately with stars like James Stewart and John Wayne. One example of many: the film these two made with John Ford in 1961, *The Man who shot Liberty Valance*, surely crucial to a reading of their careers and images, he finds "dull, predictable", and that's it. (As a test, compare these entries with the briefer but much more penetrating ones on the same stars in David Thomson's *Biographical Dictionary of the Cinema*, one book which hearteningly integrates the vision of film-buff and serious student.)

The Great Movie Stars is a rich appendix in search of an intelligent text (Richard Dyer's *Stars* in effect supplies this text, probing into the complex ways in which star images actually function in relation to narrative, audience, and society; but I suspect the notion would appeal to Shipman as little as to his critical fans). The same can be said of the bulky volume which Alain Silver and Elizabeth Ward have edited on *Film Noir*:[2] all appendix, no centre.

MORE SLICKLY PRODUCED in every way is James Monaco's *American Film Now*,[3] which has a lively text and abundant lists, diagrams, and cross-referencing, and looks at first like a good marriage.

Monaco says of the critic-turned-director Peter Bogdanovich:

> He wants to make movies passionately. But he's not passionate about anything else. He is, in a word, magnificently shallow. That's the Bogdanovich syndrome.

It's a suggestive formula that can be applied more widely. Monaco sums up certain other

[1] *The Great Movie Stars. Volume I: The Golden Years.* By DAVID SHIPMAN. Angus & Robertson, £15.00.

[2] *Film Noir.* Edited by ALAIN SILVER and ELIZABETH WARD. Secker & Warburg, £15.00 (£11.95 until 31 December).

[3] *American Film Now.* By JAMES MONACO. Oxford University Press, £9.50.

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current Hollywood film-makers in similar terms; so do Lynda Myles and Michael Pye, in their study of a group, overlapping with Monaco's, whom they term the "cine-literate generation."[4] (Monaco is American, Myles and Pye are British.) In turn, Monaco's own book, can be termed "magnificently shallow." It's another example of breadth at the expense of depth, of the way in which the work of sorting and labelling and listing can be so useful, even dazzling, as to disguise the fact that we do not learn anything very illuminating about the actual films at the centre of the study. Apparatus doesn't in the end mesh properly with the rest of the text.

Monaco's criticism has an old-fashioned ring to it. ("Friedkin could shoot the telephone book and make it exciting", and, of a Cassavetes scene, "The speech is so thick with character you could cut it.") The vague concept of an authorial "voice" is repeatedly evoked without being defined or explored. You can draw a parallel between, on the one hand, the preoccupation with "packaging" and with the creating of entertainment "machines" that he sees as characteristic of American film now, and on the other the package, the machine for processing his subject, that the book constitutes. As in so many of the films he treats, there is a shallowness at the centre. Monaco is, though, a superb journalist, at his best in capturing and sorting out the transient media scene (as in some fine *Sight and Sound* articles on American television); here, he provides both a vivid picture of how films are set up these days, and seductively clear proposals for reforming the industry, on the principle that "We can't collectively legislate *better* films; we may be able to legislate *more* films."

THE MOVIE BRATS, likewise, is well-researched journalism, ranging less widely and rather deeper. It concentrates on six directors: Coppola, Lucas, de Palma, Milius, Scorsese, and Spielberg. All these names (Milius apart) are squeezed into a single short entry ("American Cinema of the '70s") in the massive new *Critical Dictionary* edited in two volumes by Richard Roud.[5] Though dated 1980, it is essentially a work of the early 1970s, and an entry on the movie brats is a panicky afterthought.

Omens for this project looked unpromising, especially with the unhappy precedent, in the field of multi-author compendia, of *The Oxford Companion to Film*. *Cinema* contains some 200 entries, the great majority of them on individual directors; production delays mean that most of these entries were written several years ago, and they are

[4] *The Movie Brats*. By MICHAEL PYE and LYNDA MYLES. Faber & Faber, £5.25.

[5] *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary*. Edited by RICHARD ROUD. Secker & Warburg, £25.00 per 2-volume set.

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brought up to date, and otherwise commented on from a late-'70s vantage-point, not by the original contributor but by the editor. Sometimes this editorial gloss is longer than the entry proper. The spread of entries is capricious, the level of writing uneven; indeed, so unsystematic is the enterprise that it offers not even the most summary listing of the career details of its subjects. With luck, you find most of the titles of most people's films embedded somewhere in the relevant entry. The gesture towards bibliography is a joke. And yet this unsystematic quality works to the *Dictionary*'s, and the reader's, advantage. So unusable is it as any kind of comprehensive reference work that it takes its place simply as a collection of essays by divers hands. As such, it can be recommended, even at its cost of £25: over 1,000 pages for the price of only ten visits, these days, to a West End cinema.

Obviously, with so many entries and contributors (42), I can't tot up the pros and cons in detail. To represent the debit side, take its miserably scrappy handling of the British cinema. Entries are short, or shallow, or non-existent. Humphrey Jennings gets a few lines in a brief entry on "British Documentary." Seth Holt and Alexander Mackendrick get even less, squeezed in under "Robert Hamer and Ealing Comedy", while the two most obsessional of British directors, Michael Powell and David Lean—men whose work (like Hitchcock's) both embodies and invites reflection on the nature of the cinematic experience—are handled in a very flat way by John Russell Taylor, to whom most of what British material there is has been farmed out. Finally, the British horror film, which, like it or not, can hardly be called peripheral or uninfluential, is wholly ignored. Nothing at all on Terence Fisher, or Michael Reeves, or Hammer.

BUT ROUD HAS WISELY GIVEN Robin Wood and Noel Burch, two critics whom I take as representing the Dictionary's strong side, plenty of subjects and plenty of space. Wood writes mainly about Hollywood. His essays on such directors as Ford and Lang, Peckinpah and Kubrick, are models of lucidity and seriousness. Burch's territory is quite different. Whereas Wood is interested in mainstream, popular, illusionist cinema, in what can be done within it and with its tools, Burch rejects the whole apparatus of "transparent" story-telling (in which the medium effaces itself, setting in front of the omnipresent unseen spectator a seamless flow of experience), whose dominance he dates from the early sound period. His commitment is to places, times and individuals who have used other systems involving a more self-conscious "play" with form. He does not simply take refuge with the avant-garde, but is concerned to show that other kinds of commercial narrative film, of pleasure in film, than those we have become conditioned to, are possible, and have been practised, creating different—and for him less oppressive—film-audience relations. His reference points here include Carl Dreyer, the German (not the American) work of Fritz Lang, and the cinema of Japan. It is a serious point of view argued with intense consistency, and backed by close analysis of key passages, and it is excellent that it should have a place in this Dictionary, in stimulating juxtaposition, and thus potential dialogue, with other approaches.

Burch does not convince me in all his analyses, nor in his line on the mainstream narrative tradition (or classic realist text), and the same is likely to go for most readers, but his work, like that of the post-war French critic André Bazin, is of the radical kind that transcends agreement or disagreement. By his reading of the way the various "codes" of cinema—centrally, the matching of shots to create an imaginary or cinematic space—developed and have been operated, he forces us as Bazin did to look in new ways at cinematic form and at film history.

Also recently published are two full-length director studies: of Luchino Visconti and Jean Renoir, men who worked together for a short time in the '30s. Monica Stirling's Visconti book[6] may have some minor virtues as a biographical sketch—she has talked to family and others, and some of the material on Visconti's life and non-film work may for all I know be fresh, though it is all very uncritical and un-intimate—but it doesn't begin to tackle the problem of how to write about his films, either for the professional or for the casual student of film.

MUCH MORE WORTHY of respect is Alexander Sesonske's long and meticulous study of Renoir's pre-war French films:[7] I wish I could feel more enthusiastic about it. Like Shipman, it will remain valuable as a reference book, for checking facts and plots (though it does not, curiously, print the credits for the films). But Sesonske seems to me to have missed the point of a profound belief of Renoir's that he more than once reports:

> Renoir had no use for perfection or static form. He claimed to have seen some perfect films, but happily never to have made one, for those he had seen were all "boring." By a "perfect film" he meant one complete, polished, tied together in every detail, so that its audience has nothing to do but watch. In his own films he wanted the audience to have to work, to help him make the picture work. . . .

[6] *A Screen of Time*. By MONICA STIRLING. Secker & Warburg, £7.95.

[7] *Jean Renoir: The French Films*. By ALEXANDER SESONSKE. Harvard University Press, £15.00, $25.00; paper £5.95, $9.95.

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Here the reader has nothing to do but read (an ambitious attempt to use stills constructively is unfortunately muffed in the execution). The account is "tied together in every detail": chronological progress, one chapter per film, with chapters divided mechanically into sections: Treatment, Characterisation, Style and Form. It charts in a dutiful way Renoir's political involvements, and the narrative and stylistic strategies of the films. What it lacks is any spark, any cutting edge, and I value it for this reason much less highly than, say, Raymond Durgnat's book on Renoir, crammed with factual errors and fanciful notions though it is. Sesonske is a West Coast Professor with whom Renoir, in the last years of his life, collaborated closely: for all the gains in insight and accuracy thus achieved, the book seems altogether too close to its subject, measured, reverential, like a book on the Queen Mother. Which is ironic, in view of the alive and fluid and "jagged" quality of the films under discussion.

SOMETHING SIMILAR happens in S. S. Prawer's book on the horror film, *Caligari's Children*,[8] though it's a good deal livelier. It's bracing to find an Oxford Professor of German Literature dealing with such unacademic material—

> The terrors that films articulate for us may be those of our everyday existence: many a man will have recognised his own marriage-problems, in fantastically heightened form, in *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, many a woman will have recognised her marriage-problems in *I Married a Monster from Outer Space*, many an adolescent will have experienced a shock of recognition when seeing *Frankenstein* or *The Wolf Man*. . . .

—nor is this done in any patronising or "camp" spirit. Prawer not only deals, as his title suggests, with the various horror-film cycles that have succeeded *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1919), but invokes literary and dramatic precedents; he is exceedingly well-read in film literature, including modern theoretical work, and quotes extensively (several times a page, it seems). He brings to bear on the horror genre, then, the academic virtues of judiciousness and good manners—qualities which, looking back to my starting point, I don't want to belittle—but this has its negative side as well. All the quotation and categorisation, plus the extreme urbanity of the prose, has the effect of blunting the raw subversive power that is the horror film's *raison d'être*—it is made paradoxically safe and tame. It's not the mere fact of writing in a

[8] *Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror*. By S. S. PRAWER. Oxford University Press, £8.95.

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responsible way about the genre; as the work of David Pirie (*A Heritage of Horror*) and of Robin Wood again (*The American Nightmare*) illustrates. But even if this book also lacks its cutting edge, it does have solid, useful readings to make of films like *Frankenstein, Jekyll and Hyde* (1935 version), and Hammer's *Dracula* cycle. Indeed, this last section effectively shows up the illogicality of omitting Hammer and Fisher from Roud's *Dictionary* (and might be pasted into it?).

Another compensation for that project's skimping of British cinema is provided by the welcome reprint, in paperback, of Graham Greene's film criticism from the late 1930s.[9] It can be recommended to anyone interested in Greene, in cinema, and specifically in British cinema, subject of many suggestive insights and epigrams. Can we now hope for a collection of George Orwell's film reviews from the early war period, mysteriously left out of the four volumes of his Collected Papers, and dug out so far only to the extent of tantalising quotations in a *Sight and Sound* feature?

[9] *The Pleasure-Dome: The Collected Film Criticism 1935-40*. By GRAHAM GREENE. Edited by JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR. Oxford University Press, £3.50.

[10] *Realism and the Cinema*. Edited by CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £10.00, paper £4.95.

[11] *Story-Telling and Myth-Making*. By FRANK MCCONNELL. Oxford University Press, £8.95.

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FINALLY, TWO BOOKS which have nothing to do, any more than the Greene collection does, with the first of the two basic film-book functions that I set out earlier (the provision of film-industry data, facts, coverage) and everything to do with the second: investigating the ways in which film communicates.

Introducing *Realism and the Cinema*,[10] Christopher Williams refers to the concept of *narrative*:

> This is an area which has been quite scandalously neglected in film criticism, because traditionally a narrative was held to be merely the "hook" on which the artist hung his more meaningful thoughts and patterns.

And narrative is the subject of Frank McConnell's *Story-Telling and Myth-Making*,[11] which investigates the meaning that various types of story have for audiences and for societies. As in his earlier *The Spoken Seen* (subtitled *Film and the Romantic Imagination*) he jumps back and forth exuberantly between film, literature, and critical and theoretical quotes, juxtaposing *The Iliad* with *Sands of Iwo Jima* and *My Darling Clementine* with *The Song of Roland*, and not being afraid of this kind of sentence:

> It would have warmed Aristophanes', if not Aristotle's heart that neither Dean Martin nor Jerry Lewis has managed to generate the same sort of energy in his films since their celebrated split as they did during the partnership.

One danger with this style is reductiveness: it's easy to claim importance for a work just because it fits a schema, or subtly to distort a film to *make* it fit . . . we get no reference, for instance, to the manic energy which Lewis, unlike Martin, continued to display as actor/director after their split. But I find that McConnell generally skirts such dangers, and that anyway the form of his book keeps readers alert to the dangers: it opens up thought instead of closing down on it. Which is precisely what the *Realism* book is designed to do as well. It is the first in an ambitious series of British Film Institute Readers in Film Studies, bringing together a set of documents on a central topic, linked by commentary, and is a solid and promising start.

Both of these books, very different in tone and content, could sustain a lengthy discussion. The important thing to note is that concepts which have conventionally been taken for granted, like narrative, realism, and stardom, are being opened up to more systematic analysis. Academics should not hug this operation to themselves; equally, non-academics should not abandon it contemptuously to them; the subject, after all, is the live, powerful, popular media of film and (though it is the subject of none of these books) of television.

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Dr Chekhov's Faith in the Future

Modern Drama—By RONALD HAYMAN

IN THE SECOND ACT OF *The Cherry Orchard*, just before we hear the sound of the breaking string, Gaev is philosophising flatulently: Nature is glorious, beautiful, resplendent with eternal light but indifferent to human fate. Though Anya and Varya join forces to shut him up, some critics have taken the speech to convey the "heart of Chekhov's truth" (J. P. Styan) or "the essential theme of the play" (Maurice Valency). For John Tulloch, in his *Chekhov: A Structuralist Study*,[1] the mistake illustrates "the dangers of extracting meaning from textual analysis alone." His alternative is more sociological than structuralist, and it will be a pity if anti-structuralist readers are deterred by either his title or his over-extended methodological preamble, aligning himself with Lucien Goldmann's "genetic structuralism." The discussion of Chekhov's training, experiences and attitudes as a doctor illuminates the objectives underlying his work as a writer.

After the emancipation of the serfs, the new rural administrative units—the *zemstva*—became centres of liberalism, and in medicine professionalism developed as the Czar conceded a higher degree of local autonomy. Chekhov, who qualified as a doctor in 1884, identified closely with the *zemstvo*, and the evolution of his values was conditioned both by professional activity and by membership of a group which sharply differentiated him from the alienated and isolated intellectuals. From August to October 1892, during the cholera epidemic, he worked full-time for the *zemstvo* with no salary, treating over 1,000 patients, farming, planting trees, and, despite ill health and frustration as a writer, he was left with "the feeling of never having passed a summer so well." He went on working as a doctor till 1897 (seven years before his death) and in the story "Ward Number Six" (1892) he describes insanitary conditions and incompetent nursing at a non-*zemstvo* asylum, while the story "Sakhalin Island" is an abrasive exposure of the state's provision for the sick.

According to Mr Tulloch it was while Darwinism was providing Russian doctors with an ideology that Chekhov "internalised a perception of reality which he was never to alter." He kept his optimism about the potential of the individual, but tension was created by a despondency about environmental pressures which inevitably provoked such pathological responses as Chekhov portrayed in Ivanov, Konstantin and Vanya. He dismissed Goncharov's Oblomov as a "trivial, average" character, "not worth elevating to the position of a social type"; superfluous men should be presented only if you could be accurate about both contours and context. Once people were made to recognise how degraded their lives were, they'd surely work to create something better. Like Herbert Spencer, Chekhov believed that there were scientific principles underlying life, and that art should be based on an accurate understanding of them. His fictions are informed by faith in scientific progress and in a diffusion of knowledge that will lead to a better future. One of the ways in which Mr Tulloch's book is valuable is that it will help directors to overcome the embarrassment they so often reveal in handling those declarations of faith in the future which come so insistently at the climaxes of *Uncle Vanya* and *Three Sisters*. Tulloch's reading of *Three Sisters* is much better than Styan's or Magarshack's: he gets the balance right. On *The Cherry Orchard* he makes some good points and nearly gets the balance right, but isn't prepared to admit that Chekhov's despondency may have grown or that his perception of reality may have altered.

FOR JOHN TULLOCH the three sisters' longing for Moscow is a sign of weakness, a rejection of their milieu; for Harvey Pitcher[2] it's a reflection of the tubercular Chekhov's impatience at having to live in sunny boredom at Yalta, over 800 miles south of Moscow. He was only 24 when he began to spit blood in 1884, and five years later his elder brother,

[1] *Chekhov: A Structuralist Study*. By JOHN TULLOCH. Macmillan Press, £15.00.

[2] *Chekhov's Leading Lady: A Portrait of the Actress Olga Knipper*. By HARVEY PITCHER. John Murray, £8.50.

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Nicholas, died of tuberculosis, but it wasn't until 1897 that Chekhov acknowledged the implications of his symptoms and accepted medical treatment. He met Olga Knipper a year later, when he was 38, and she was 30. They became engaged in August 1900, and when, after a nine-month delay, they married, he sent a telegram to his mother—"Everything will remain as before"—and a letter to his sister: "This action of mine will not, I think, in any way alter my way of life or the circumstances in which it has so far been lived." Knipper's failure to realise she was pregnant may have helped to cause the miscarriage she had in 1902; afterwards, as before, her career with the Art Theatre kept her in Moscow, while Chekhov's illness kept him in Yalta. Correspondence was, for her, more frustrating than fulfilling:

> "You're always so calm and even-tempered, and I sometimes feel that no separations, no feelings, no changes, have any effect on you. This isn't because you have a cold nature or are indifferent, but because there's something in you that won't allow you to attach importance to all the everyday happenings of life."

Certainly they could have arranged to spend more time together than they did. In different ways they seem to have been nervous of each other, and of themselves while in the other's company. And did Chekhov, before the marriage, admit to her—or to himself—how serious the dangers were that he would soon die and that he might infect her? These are mysteries that Chekhov's biographers have left unsolved, and Harvey Pitcher's book offers little help.

Beckett's anti-Chekhovian prognosis is that the future will be no better than the present or the past, and the title of Maurice Valency's new book, *The End of the World*,[3] points to the way in which negative currents have coalesced in 20th-century drama. "*Endgame* takes the drama of Symbolism some steps further toward the edge of the void, perhaps as far as it was destined to go." Valency isn't the first critic to argue that Symbolism is central to the tradition in which modern drama is developing. I think it is, but unfortunately this discursive book—presumably a conflation of lecture material—won't be of much help in getting this view generally accepted. Valency is prone to verbosity, imprecision in analysis, and inconsistency in level. He calls his book an introduction to contemporary drama and summarises plots as if he doesn't expect his readers ever to have seen a performance of *Waiting for Godot* or *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, but he's also liable to drop in unexplained references to the technical innovations Guarini made in *Il pastor fido* or to Jean-Baptiste Greuze's skill in depicting young girls.

Some of his judgments are ridiculous: Giraudoux is praised for a bitterness which "has a more subtle savour than Ionesco or Beckett could manage." But occasionally Mr Valency makes illuminating points, as when he compares *Waiting for Godot* with Simone Weil's *Waiting for God*. The attitude that brings about salvation, Weil maintains, is:

> The waiting or attentive and faithful immobility that lasts indefinitely and cannot be shaken. The slave who waits near the door so as to open immediately the master knocks is the best image of it. He must be ready to die of hunger and exhaustion rather than change his attitude. It must be possible for his companions to call him, talk to him, beat him, without his even turning his head. Even if he is told the master is dead, and even if he believes it, he will not move.

Could this have influenced the Pozzo-Lucky relationship? With one foot planted in slapstick and the other in theology, Beckett maintains an admirable equilibrium, but, like many of Mr Valency's best points, this has nothing to do with the end of the world.

BETWEEN BECKETT'S reductionism and Jerzy Grotowski's there's a clear parallel: both have gone as far as they can down a *via negativa*, using less and less of the facilities that the medium offers, facilities that Chekhov took to be indispensable. Beckett is certainly the greatest living dramatist, but he has written only three full-length plays for the theatre and the last of these was premiered in 1961; Grotowski is one of the most important living directors but according to Jan Blonski,[4] the core of the work at Grotowski's Theatre Laboratory was wordless experiments, and Grotowski maintains that the truly essential questions today don't have "any answer at all in words." The indications are that *Apocalypsis cum Figuris* (1968–73) will remain his last theatrical production, and, claiming to have made a spiritual breakthrough, he's now declaring himself to be beyond theatre, or beyond art.

> For years one worked and wanted to know more, to acquire more skill, but in the end one had to reject it all and not learn but unlearn, not to know how to do but how not to do, and always face doing—to risk total defeat, not a defeat in the eyes of others—which is less important—but the defeat of . . . a failure to meet with oneself.

[3] *The End of the World: An Introduction to Contemporary Drama*. By MAURICE VALENCY. Oxford University Press, £12.95, $19.95.

[4] "Holiday or Holiness? A Critical Revaluation of Grotowski", Jan Blonski, in *Twentieth Century Polish Theatre*. Edited by BOHDAN DROZDOWSKI. John Calder, £7.95.

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Temperamentally attracted towards ritual, austerity and sacrifice, Grotowski had been working on the Artaudian assumption that theatre must provide an arena for profound and non-verbal contact between inner life of performer and inner life of audience. If the actor can offer his human truth, the spectator will recognise and accept the overlap with his own. But one thing, says Grotowski, is certain: "in order to select one another democratically, one has to select one another mutually." To be democratic the communion must be unpressured, and this is what precludes both the rigorous training and the quasi-sacrificial self-conquest, the quasi-religious self-discipline, which had previously seemed to be indispensable prerequisites for the kind of performance Grotowski demanded. At the Laboratory, he believed

> there ought to happen what is simplest, most elementary, confident among beings ... based on such things as the fact of recognising someone, as dividing substances, sharing elements ... meetings connected with the wind, with the tree, with the earth, with the water, with the fire, with the grass—with the Animal. All this contains "the likeness of God," man giving.

He rejects the word *religious* but accepts the concept of holiness. He wants to arouse a sense of holiness which is more primary than any of the established religions can offer today.

> I am with you not because I am doing something for you, but because you look at me and I too am looking at you, and together we are looked at like flower, river, fish in that river.... We have no other role to play for ourselves, except our common finding of ourselves in nature.

This seems to have more in common with the faith behind *Waiting for God* than with the ambivalence behind *Waiting for Godot*, but it does have something in common with both.

It was Ödön von Horváth who wrote "Nothing gives such a strong impression of infinity as stupidity does", and the best of his plays, such as *Tales from the Vienna Woods* are poised—rather more cynically perhaps than *Waiting for Godot*, but not much less playfully—between the vestiges of religious faith and a despair that points beyond the outer edges of 20th-century decadence. Ian Huish's book on Horváth[5] sets out to do no more than introduce the plays, touching even more briefly on the novels, but it highlights the use of silence in *Tales from the Vienna Woods* to cover what Huish carefully (or carelessly?) describes as "some of the most unspeakable actions in the

[5] *Horváth: A Study*. By IAN HUISH. Heinemann Educational Books, £5.25.

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play", and he stresses the gap between the sub-text and the *Bildungsjargon* that Horváth makes his characters speak. Negative elements are compounded fairly strongly together in the events that disillusion Marianne, killing her innocence and her baby, without killing her minimal faith—from asking God whether he's listening she progresses to cursing him and spitting.

Horváth was using the Viennese waltz ironically—it's played by a "heavenly string orchestra" and gauchely on the piano by a schoolgirl—and he was writing a form of anti-theatre. "Quite deliberately I'm now destroying the old folk play, both formally and morally." But in turning, as he did, "more to the tradition of folk-singers and folk-comedians than to the authors of the classical folk play" he was doing something positive. He deserves to be much better known in Britain.

UNTIL WE ACTUALLY REACH the end of the world, drama and theatre will constantly be capable of renewal, but *renewal* isn't the word to use for what's currently going on in this country in the spaces that ought to be devoted to theatrical experiment, and it's dismally appropriate that a Communist journalist, the theatre critic of the *Morning Star*, should be commissioned to write the first book-length account of the work done by the Royal Shakespeare Company in The Other Place at Stratford and The Warehouse in Covent Garden.[6] Colin Chambers finds it significant that the RSC chose "the symbolic heart of finance capital, the City, as its new home." Like the new National Theatre, the Barbican building is "meant to reflect a democratic, supposedly classless, industrial welfare state .... The class reality, however was shown in both cases by the fact that neither building was ready on time." Fortunately the younger generation was "fed up with a hollow consumer society that paraded its false values everywhere." For these admirable youngsters "truth was important, size was not."

The heroine of the story in this book is Buzz Goodbody, who graduated from Sussex University in 1967 when she was twenty, became a member of the Communist Party, and joined the RSC as John Barton's personal assistant: "for eighteen months she put up with the shopping, the paper work, parking his car, getting his pills, and ironing his shirts." She directed Trevor Griffiths' *Occupations*, which opened the first season at The Place in October 1971 with Ben Kingsley as Gramsci, and she pioneered the opening of The Other Place at Stratford in 1974. The first production there was a shortened version of *King Lear* which later came to The Place. Edmund addressed his first words ("Thou, Nature, art my goddess") to a girl in the front row of the audience, stroking her face. This struck me as odd; Mr Chambers now explains that "moments were highlighted to show sexual attraction as a motor in the play."

After Buzz Goodbody killed herself in 1975, Barry Kyle ran The Other Place for the rest of the season, and Trevor Nunn took over himself for the following year. When Ron Daniels succeeded him in December 1976, "there was no democratic structure introduced to run the theatre, which like the rest of the RSC, including The Warehouse, operates under a system of pressures, influence, trust and delegation." Daniels is interested in "plays that look at 'how we face and make choices' and at 'the desire to change and the pressure to conform'", but when Colin Chambers refers to The Other Place's "philosophy", he obviously doesn't mean anything definable.

Occasionally he makes generalisations about achievement, but these are always unsubstantiated and often quirky or gnomic. For example:

> The small spaces threw up a new style that contested the stand-and-deliver approach, but often only as its opposite, as was seen in the 1978–79 RST seasons—for example, Bob Peck's blunt Iago to Donald Sinden's florid Othello.
>
> An actor also develops the commitment and skills required to present contemporary writers who are as true to their times as Shakespeare was to his.

But the book offers no serious criticism of ways in which the RSC's two new spaces have been exploited. Instead we're given bizarre titbits of biographical information about directors. We aren't told what pills John Barton was taking, but Howard Davies, artistic director of The Warehouse, "lost one-and-a-half stone getting the first season on, and the new theatre open." There's also some dogmatic trumpeting rather in the style of *Pravda:* "It was appropriate that this new examination of ourselves and our society was taking place in a warehouse—symbol of a nation's true wealth created by labour."

ACCORDING TO Colin Chambers, "'Social awareness' had swept the theatrical board in the 1970s, trailing even light comedy in its wake, but the conservative mood at the end of the decade was more favourable to sophisticated 'boulevard'

[6] *Other Spaces: New Theatre and the RSC.* By COLIN CHAMBERS. Eyre Methuen, £2.25.

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writers such as Tom Stoppard than to the Barkers, Brentons, or Edgars." Until *Night and Day* was produced at the Phoenix in November 1978, Stoppard hadn't had a play premiered in the West End since 1968, but he's not a Left Winger (which is what Mr Chambers means), unlike nearly all the living playwrights who have their work performed at The Warehouse or The Other Place: Howard Brenton, Howard Barker, Edward Bond, David Edgar, Paul Thompson, Barrie Keeffe, Stephen Poliakoff, Nigel Baldwin, etc.

The most talented playwright of their generation, David Hare, hasn't had any of his work staged at either of the RSC's new spaces, and it's interesting that his television play *Dreams of Leaving*[7] moves away from socio-political preoccupations towards the personal and emotional. An ambitious young journalist meets a beautiful girl whose life seems to glide glamorously and promiscuously over all the glossiest areas of London life, but though she insists that she's in love with him, she'll never go to bed with him. The only implausible sequence is one in which a conference room full of hardened journalists listens in silence while he harangues them about honesty: "I dread a lifetime randomly producing something which we all distrust and despise. I dread the effects on my person of a lifetime given over to royalty and dogs. If we who work here can't believe in it, how the hell can the people out there?"

More typical of the plays which are currently winning inflated reputations is Bernard Pomerance's *The Elephant Man*.[8] David Schofield's stylised suggestion of deformity—body language in shorthand—justifies a visit to the National Theatre, but instead of exploring the theatrical potential of the case history, Pomerance writes a fashion-conscious and superficial script which only perfunctorily disguises his lack of interest in the unfortunate elephant man, who is presented more as a victim of Victorian society than of his disease. The freak show entrepreneur, the fashionable doctor, the condescending aristocrats, the opportunistic hospital administrator are all glibly satirised. The best scene is the one in which the prim doctor is outraged when an actress is generous enough to take pity on a man who'd never otherwise see what a female body looks like, but generally Pomerance is content to slam the other characters for doing exactly what he's doing himself: indulging his curiosity while putting on a show of more sympathy than he feels.

[7] *Dreams of Leaving*. By DAVID HARE. Faber & Faber, £2.25.
[8] *The Elephant Man*. By BERNARD POMERANCE. Faber & Faber, £2.25.

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Pity the Poor Philosophers

Coward's Comic Genius—By DOUGLAS DUNN

READING NOEL COWARD'S plays encourages the belief that there is a point where Literature and Show Business meet. While it is difficult to know exactly what happens there, these four volumes of his plays,[1] which take us up to 1941, certainly suggest that it may have provided Coward with the criteria as well as the conditions within which he conceived his work.

"When I was young", he said, "I wanted more than anything to be a star." He was 20 when *I'll Leave it to You* was staged. Being under age, Coward had to watch his father sign his contract. By the appearance of *The Vortex* in November 1924, he had three other plays up his sleeve—*Fallen Angels, Hay Fever* and *Easy Virtue*. *Semi-Monde* and *This Was a Man* both fell victim to the Lord Chamberlain (Lord Cromer) in 1926. *Semi-Monde* was left unproduced until 1978, when it was staged by the Glasgow Citizens' company, while *This Was a Man* was played in New York and was a flop. Even so, it was a decade of successes rather than failures, of stardom rather than obscurity. Six other productions saw the footlights of day, including *The Marquise, Bitter Sweet,* and *Private Lives* (in 1930). It is a pity that Messrs Mander and Mitchenson have not had room to include the texts of *Semi-Monde* and *This Was a Man*, although a writer as prolific as Coward is an embarrassment before the high costs of book production.

Coward was fast over paper. "In 1923 the play would have been written and typed within a few days of my thinking of it", he wrote of *Private Lives*, "but in 1929 I had learned the wisdom of not welcoming a new idea too ardently, so I forced it into the back of my mind." That is, for a little while. It didn't take long, until, recovering from 'flu in Shanghai:

> The idea now seemed ripe enough to have a shot at, so I started it, propped up in bed with a writing block and an Eversharp pencil, and completed it, roughly, in four days.

His attitude to *Private Lives* offers hints of his principles as a dramatist.

> I thought it a shrewd and witty comedy, well constructed on the whole, but psychologically unstable; however, its entertainment value seemed obvious enough, and its acting opportunities for Gertie and me admirable, so I cabled her immediately in New York telling her to keep herself free for the autumn, and put the whole thing aside for a few weeks before typing and revising it.
>
> With influenza and *Private Lives* both behind me I entered the social whirl of Shanghai with zest.

That is, he did not allow himself to take what he thought was wrong with the play too seriously. Instead, he was more than satisfied with its "entertainment value", and these "admirable" roles for himself and his friend. In this case, his preference for the values of Show Business hardly matters. It is the psychological instability of Elyot and Amanda that is the most amusing thing in the play, and perhaps its very essence.

COWARD'S EARLIER PLAYS prick at the pomposity principles of English life. Modernity, in behaviour, codes of conduct, fashions, and in its encouragement of irresponsibility and self-deception, intrigued him. "One gets carried away by glamour, and personality, and magnetism—they're beastly treacherous things", Bunty says to Tom in *The Vortex*. "Nothing but the ceaseless din of trying to be amused", Nicky complains as he quizzes his mother about her reckless infidelities. *The Vortex* establishes an extreme of that kind of irresponsibility which is supported by leisure, financial abundance, social superiority in the English manner, and anxious self-confidence. The pretence of that small social class is clearly exposed, but the play's "vortex of beastliness" amounts to little other than the philandering of idle mediocrities and the courted self-destruction of their nervy offspring. "It's the fault of circumstances and civilization—civilization makes

[1] *Coward Plays*. Edited by RAYMOND MANDER and JOE MITCHENSON. Eyre Methuen, Vols One and Two, £5.95, paper £1.75; Vols Three and Four, £6.50, paper £1.95.

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rottenness so much easier." Nicky's generalisation is as wobbly as Coward's attempt to put him on the side of life, almost as if he realised that, if he hadn't, *The Vortex* would have been as nihilistic as the lives it portrayed. It amounts to a kind of restraint.

Nicky's disenchanted generalisations are like the infuriated condemning of sexual repression, promiscuity, egotism, deceit, and stuffiness which Bunty mounts in *The Vortex*, Myra in *Hay Fever* and Larita in *Easy Virtue*. They are made to look relatively astute in doing so. Yet the censure in these plays does not seem to arise from a passionate concern for reality so much as from the observation that these faults exist and are more or less characteristic. Sometimes it even looks as if "seriousness" has been introduced to lend entertainment a dash of hot-headed concern, or to honour the moral traditions of comedy. Beneath the shallow surfaces of Coward's moralising, there is little more than finger-wagging, an indication that he was out of sorts with stultifying conventions, and excess, but that some show of ethical overview was necessary to guarantee the bona fides of "a serious writer" writing serious plays.

COWARD'S SATIRES are not satires so much as plays with a certain amount of satirical this-and-that. He served the fashions of the moment by adding style to what, ostensibly, he was criticising. Style is a matter of dialogue more than of the level of society his characters inhabit, their glitter, the décor they move through, or their glamour. It is a matter, too, of his remarkable gifts of pace, discretion and construction, and the inspired creation of surprises.

To what extent, though, does the dialogue of a play like *Private Lives* mimic a way of speaking Coward had observed? Or is it a theatrical style he invented, as much influenced by the theatre itself as by life? Whatever its source, Coward was the recorder, or inventor, of that quick-witted, snappy speech which has become the vinegar in which the myth of the privileged and disenchanting English 1920s is pickled. Whether in the up-tempo squabbles of *Private Lives*, or in its tender moments touched with expensive moonlight, the romance of infinite wherewithal, the play is as silkenly mythical as that era of cocktails, transatlantic liners, suave dressing-gowns, and cigarette smoke trailing from long holders among the angular shapes of *arts décoratifs*.

Coward's quarrelling couples, their high-pitched silliness, their vindictive affections, their inability to be civil even in love, are among the most amusing spectacles in the English theatre, whether in *Private Lives* or *Blithe Spirit*. But what they represent is not real society. His characters live in a world of West-End Englishness, or in a curious combination

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of the society life which Coward had observed at first hand and the back-firing fairy tales they encouraged his imagination to produce. I am not quite sure if Coward believed in Elyot's principles, but I suspect that, for the time being, he did.

> AMANDA: Don't laugh at me, I'm serious.
> ELYOT: You mustn't be serious, my dear one, it's just what they want.
> AMANDA: Who's they?
> ELYOT: All the futile moralists who try to make life unbearable. Laugh at them. Laugh at everything, all their sacred shibboleths. Flippancy brings out the acid in their damned sweetness and light.

A little later, Elyot says,

> Let's be superficial and pity the poor philosophers. Let's blow trumpets and squeakers, and enjoy the party as much as we can, like very small, quite idiotic schoolchildren. Let's savour the delight of the moment. Come and kiss me, darling, before your body rots, and worms pop in and out of your eye sockets.

Elyot's selfish immoralism is preposterous, but it is hardly a serious point of view. Like the sneaky elopement of Amanda and Elyot with which the play ends, and their abandonment of Victor and Sibyl, the view of life which Elyot represents (if that is what it is) is a carefully considered comic thrill. It is outrageously in Elyot's character and not a recommendation of how to behave. At the same time, it is perfectly credible that Coward *would* vaunt flippancy or anti-intellectualism as serious ideas, or at least disguised as such. Inching close to satire as *Private Lives* does, it succeeds in being unconventional instead of blatantly critical, as if by arrangement, by mutual agreement with the audience as to how far Coward will take them into seriousness through comedy without ruining their evening. Literary skill in the play is seen to conspire with the demands of Show Business.

TWO SIMILAR STORIES are presented in *Bitter Sweet* (1929), one from the past, and one that is just beginning. The parallelism is sentimental, but the conventions of "operetta" can survive that, just as they are natural to the boldness of the show's theme—marrying for love, even if it means leaving England and its stodginess, chancing everything on life and leaving the rest to feeling and circumstances. Lady Shayne, formerly the Sarah (Sari) who had run off with her Viennese music teacher, nevertheless finds social prestige and advancement after the love of her life has been killed in a duel defending her honour. Filtered through Franz Lehar as it is, the story succeeds in being pure Coward even to the extent of criticising a conventional code of conduct without being seen

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to want its entire removal. Moments of affecting dramatic surprise are interspersed with songs such as *Footmen's Quartet, We All wore a Green Carnation, If Love Were All* and *I'll See You Again.* There is something unassailably charming about a man whose talents were not only theatrically omnibus but romantically melodic as well. The impression is one of a knowing, worldly-wise uncle of vastly superior experience.

In 1930 Coward wrote *Post-Mortem*, a savage and passionate denunciation of war. Although it has not yet been staged professionally—its first performance was in 1944, by British prisoners-of-war in Germany—it has moments of anarchic theatrical passion, especially in Scene V (among the best things Coward wrote) where the dead soldier John visits his father, the proprietor of a warmongering and opinion-raking newspaper. Edification or criticism, plays such as *Private Lives* suggest, are the curse of the theatrical classes unless the writer's outspokenness is kept closely in check. Yet it is heartening to read Coward when he subordinates his verbal dexterity and lightness of touch to his convictions. Although *Post-Mortem* has been televised (in 1968), it is still maintained that the play is virtually unstageable—an opinion with which I disagree.

As if dissatisfied with light comedy, Coward undertook *Cavalcade*, perhaps to prove he was more of a heavyweight than his reputation made him out to be. *Cavalcade* plots the stories of two families, the upper-class Marryots, and the lower-class Bridges who begin the play as the Marryots' servants. It covers the period from New Year's Eve 1899 to New Year's Eve 1930, a span almost exactly the same as Coward's age at the time. With crushing obviousness, he trots through one disaster after another, until it looks as though both families have been as badly served by the 20th century as was possible. Before the final scene, we get this from Jane Marryot:

> Now, then, let's couple the future of England with the past of England. The glories and victories and triumphs that are over, and the sorrows that are over, too. Let's drink to our sons who made part of the pattern and to our hearts that died with them. Let's drink to the spirit of gallantry and courage that made a strange Heaven out of an unbelievable Hell, and let's drink to the hope that one day this country of ours, which we love so much, will find dignity and greatness and peace again.

In the last scene, set in a night-club going wild, *The Twentieth-Century Blues*—

> Blues, nothing to win or lose.
> It's getting me down.
> Blues, I've got those weary Twentieth-Century Blues

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is followed by stage directions which organise the cast of 400 like this:

> Suddenly it all fades into darkness and silence and away at the back a Union Jack glows through the blackness.
>
> The lights slowly come up and the whole stage is composed of massive tiers, upon which stand the entire Company. The Union Jack flies over their heads as they sing *God Save the King*.

And yet, not long after, Coward was playing in *Design for Living* in America. It was a play for which he had a soft spot. Of its three main characters, he wrote, "These glib, over-articulate and amoral creatures force their lives into fantastic shapes and problems because they cannot help themselves." With its cleverly controlled, cleverly squandered writing, tongue in cheek, it is a bright, amusing and droll play. But the contrast between *Design for Living* and *Cavalcade* is one of calculated naughtiness, an air of superiority and devil-may-care privacy, against a grand-slam wallow in abject patriotism and the desirability of social distinctions. It is inconceivable that Coward failed to realise that his gaiety and his full-hearted nationalism were sufficiently contradictory to make him vulnerable to intellectual snipers willing to observe the difference between beautifully garmented high-jinks and appeals to national unity on the terms of the old order. He could get away with wagging his finger at wayward individuals, but he could not bring himself to challenge a society whose more earnest, more effective corruptions supported the respectable and the *beau monde* alike.

A similar contrast of *Blithe Spirit* and *Present Laughter* with *This Happy Breed* emphasises Coward's dual endeavours: to entertain, and to uplift with ponderous incitement. With *Private Lives*, *Blithe Spirit* is probably Coward's best known and best liked play. Like the earlier comedy. it dramatises people in love who find it hard not to dislike each other, or, at least, have trouble in keeping their voices down. Charles's first wife Elvira is conjured up from the spirit world, but such is her jealousy of Ruth, his second wife, and such are Charles's delusions, that Elvira is banished back to the grave, taking Ruth with her as the result of a misfiring plan to bump off Charles. The play ends with invisible wifely tantrums failing to shake Charles's resolve that at long last he might now begin to enjoy himself. Theatrical hokum of this sort was probably Coward's forte. He has a free rein for his comic heartlessness, and for the more "character" comic opportunities of Madame Arcati.

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FOR ALL HIS SURE-FOOTEDNESS as a comedian, there is no getting away from the degree to which he stuffed his shirt with patriotic straw. *This Happy Breed* is a roast-beef Tory tract. Frank Gibbons, an astute, amiable, allegedly right-thinking little man, is representative of what the play expounds as the best of England. He gives second place to his awareness of injustice and unjustifiable put-down in order to assert his station in life. His Conservatism is decked out slyly with points of view which complicate what otherwise is patriotic wholeheartedness. No doubt Coward felt strongly about Frank Gibbons's type as the backbone of England, but *This Happy Breed* amounts to sentimental overstatement. Decency is a virtue most of us take seriously, but it is typical of Coward that he must invest it with exclusively yeoman tolerance at one point in the play (in the 1920s) and with public-bar obstinacy later on.

> ETHEL: It is wrong, isn't it? All that Bolshie business?
>
> FRANK: Oh, there's something to be said for it, there's always something to be said for everything. Where they go wrong is in trying to get things done too quickly. We don't like doing things too quickly in this country. It's like gardening, someone once said we're a nation of gardeners, and they weren't far out. We're used to planting things and watching them grow and looking out for changes in the weather. . . .
>
> ETHEL: You and your gardening!

International threats in the forms of Nazism and Fascism don't get much of a mention in Coward's survey. Instead, the play claims that if England's tired, then watch out, for "the old girl's got stamina and don't you make any mistakes about it and it's up to us ordinary people to keep things steady."

In spite of his resentment at how classier types get on faster than he does in the Travel Agency where he works, Frank has a poor opinion of his daughter Queenie's ideas of style and good times, which Frank thinks of as simply above her station. Queenie gets what in the morality of the play she deserves. She runs off with a married Major and is eventually ditched in Brussels, returning to marry

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the boy next door, by now a Warrant Officer in the Navy. In spite of the romantic strands in the play's fabric, and subsidiary characters such as Frank's sister, and Granny, its social vision is made to hinge on Frank's self-conscious approval of where he stands in the pyramid of the social order. His home-spun peroration, with which the play ends, directed at his grandson in his pram, is theatrically effective, and that, perhaps, was all it had to be. Asserting Englishness and human nature as an excuse for everything that happens, it sums up a play which is as consistently ideological as *Waiting for Lefty* or any other left-wing writings of the 1930s. It is all done on the pretence of being apolitical, of being "decent", of being "English", of speaking "horse-sense."

Coward was not the Mayfair Playboy people liked to think him—for one thing, he was far too hard-working. Nor was he the man of the people, or the spokesman of lower middle-class respectability which *This Happy Breed* makes him out to be (and significantly, he played the part of Frank Gibbons himself). He lived somewhere in between, in the professional and well-off world of successful writers and players and entertainers and their friends. His success, his style of life, his predisposition towards "serious frivolity" did not allow him to share in the emergencies of ordinariness to anything like the extent that would have made his appeal to middle-class decency earned. It was an appeal from above to above, pretending, by mimetic means, to come from below.

As one more form of West End Englishness, *This Happy Breed* could be seen as a piece of right-wing propaganda conducted according to the values of Show Business hand-in-hand with literary artifice. It is, I'm sure, less spectacular and less dishonest than that. It seems to me that Coward expected too much of his own abilities in thinking that he could handle his particular kind of light comedy, with its social affiliations, and surveys of recent history as well. His wit was virtually fail-safe, his dramatic skills certain, but his mind, when it came to interpretations of the national predicament, was little more than dogmatically commonplace.

What has to be admitted is the brilliance and idiosyncracy of Coward's comic genius. Plays like *The Vortex* and *Private Lives*, or *Design for Living*, now look like fantasies of lapsed gods and goddesses struggling in the aprons of luxury. Fast-talking, nervous, always at loggerheads, they look unreal, like puppets, spectacularly inconsequential as they bicker over their intimate secrets and selfish choices while the world goes to pot (although their world has the agreeable sensation of seeming not to exist other than for the provision of pleasure, means of transport, tailoring and the manufacture of cigarettes and alcohol, and a supply of servants). There is something pure as well as disturbingly delightful about their theatricality. That fashionable inverted snobbery which condemns Coward's comedies is surely not so much wrong as beside the point.

Tragic Accident

By David Pryce-Jones

WHAT OUGHT Jews in Germany to have done when Hitler came to power in 1933? Some of course emigrated immediately or during the next six years, and by doing so saved their lives if they travelled far enough; but at least as many stayed where they were until too late. Hitherto German Jews had imagined themselves to be assimilated, and the Zionists among them, who challenged this illusion and appreciated the Nazi threat correctly, were held to be scaremongers. Why did the argument in favour of emigration (and emigration to Palestine in particular) meet with such widespread emotional resistance? Had short-sightedness on the part of Jews perhaps been an essential component of their inevitable destruction?

Bruno Bettelheim, for one, considers that Jews who failed to emigrate from Germany in good time had been "denying reality", wilfully deceiving themselves about the danger they were in, and to that extent they had it coming to them. Simply by allowing themselves to be available to their murderers, Jews had been conniving in events—thus, with monstrous perversity, victims become blameworthy for being victims.

In contrast, Walter Laqueur, the historian and political commentator, has written:

> "The question of what was known about the Holocaust and when, and of why the information was not believed, is one of the riddles that makes understanding the catastrophe so difficult. The rejection of information which for one reason or another is unacceptable may well be a normal psychological mechanism, at least up to a point.

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But beyond that point, when the veracity of the information becomes incontrovertible, continued resistance to it becomes almost inexplicable—all the more so when the events concerned are not of marginal importance or occurring in some faraway country, but constitute mortal danger to the survival of one's people or oneself.'

Now in *The Missing Years*[1] Laqueur has dramatised the Jewish denial of reality in Hitler's Germany; resorting to fiction, that is to say, in order to enter into the full and "almost inexplicable" complexity of individual choice in such extreme circumstances. The character standing before this choice of how to react towards Nazism is Richard Lasson, now an elderly doctor, telling his life-story with hindsight and a good deal of reflection. How he came to decide what he ought to do is not to be understood without a thorough description of his background and upbringing, with the result that the Jewish experience of Germany at once comes to be represented through him.

"I think I was never really unhappy in my boyhood. I had the good fortune to be born—just—in the nineteenth century, a fact which has given me considerable satisfaction. It was a much better century, on the whole, than the one that succeeded it, and certainly more humane."

If the time of his birth appeared auspicious to Richard Lasson, so did the place, the country town of Mariabronn, small and friendly, with a liberal newspaper, brass bands, and a kindly rabbi with few demands on his community. There was no anti-Semitism to speak of, except in the schoolroom, or on the part of some drunken peasant. To set standards of comparison, the young Richard is taken by his father, the owner of a local factory, on a lengthy visit to Paris, with a *bal musette* thrown in, and Jean Jaurès preaching revolution; then on to imperial London, where a branch of the Lasson family has found its Jewishness awkward. Pre-1914 Germany may have been provincial, in short, but its values were harmless and more engaging than those of humbugging France or drearily snobbish England.

To establish the determining political facts so methodically is to forgo the novelist's advantage of selective silences. Perhaps there was no other approach, given the novel's intentions; but when it comes to the First War, Lasson's service and his Iron Cross are merely evidence of conscientious patriotism among Jews, too depersonalised to be much more than history-in-disguise. The death in action of Lasson's elder brother is less a narrative demand than a Jewish sacrifice to give the lie to the Stab-in-the-Back legend. In peace-time, Lasson is carried through inflation and his years in medical school by a dollar remittance from an American uncle. Briefly he has to look after a German politician who is a lightly-veneered Stresemann, and so meets Elizabeth, the attractive but penniless daughter of minor German aristocrats. The good humour of his courtship and early marriage, followed by the birth of two sons, as well as the virtual certainty of rising by talent to the top of his profession, make Richard Lasson "a lucky young man" in his own eyes. German Jewry at that point would have answered with a general *Amen*.

With so much to lose, Lasson will obviously search for any alternative to confrontation with the Nazi reality. When Jews are first beaten up on the streets, he and his friends simply try to take detours to avoid the ugly sights. In a crucial scene, dated to the summer of 1937, he says good-bye to someone much like himself, Egon, an economist who has arranged his passage to America. Egon's wife implores Lasson to emigrate too. His response is to sink into depression, to offer Elizabeth a divorce which she rejects with spirit, to think of suicide. So the trap is sprung.

AFTER 1940 no Jew was able to leave Germany. Deportation began the following year, with Jews from all over Germany being brought to a

[1] *The Missing Years*. By WALTER LAQUEUR. Weidenfeld & Nicholson, £5.95.

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collecting-point in Berlin. As a doctor at this collecting-point, Lasson is placed to observe the destruction of German Jewry. The people on the trains now become representative of Jewry as a whole; Lasson is differentiated from them because his marriage to the Protestant Elizabeth qualifies him under Nazi law to be a "privileged Jew", one not required to wear the Star of David. Under the same law his sons are *mischlinge*, racial half-and-halfs benefiting from certain exemptions. But even in Lasson's condition, elements of choice are still possible: on the one hand he runs the risk of entering a bombed-out building to rescue a child trapped inside, on the other hand he refuses to become one of the Jewish officials appointed by the Nazis to do the organisational work which is the preliminary to Auschwitz.

Only exceptional cases like the Lassons, together with the few Jews living somehow undetected or underground, remained in the city by 1943, when Berlin was declared "*Judenrein*" by the *Gestapo*. Rather than continue in this dangerous twilight zone, the two sons, now no longer at school, decide to break out and head for Switzerland. Their unfolding epic holds the end of the novel. The boys have had to run for their lives as a consequence of their father having stayed put. Lucky after their fashion, the sons prove themselves active where the father had been passive. An extra motive is adduced for keeping the latter in Berlin, when Elizabeth is discovered to be dying of a fatal disease. Without this twist, it is clear that Lasson has long since been conditioned by his cast of mind and his experience not to move. The irony is that Elizabeth, through whom the "privileged Jew" status has been conveyed, is the one member of the family not to survive the war.

Survival induces guilt. Years afterwards, Lasson turns on the radio to hear Egon, now Sir Egon, delivering a lecture, and torments himself with the thought that Egon had made a choice then which enables him to be witty now. In the worst days of the deportations it had occurred to Lasson that

> "I might well be one of the last witnesses of a historical era which would be quite inexplicable to future generations, and that I perhaps had an obligation to collect material that had any bearing on this period."

Well, here the material is, duly collected and presented, to show that at the turning-point, in that summer of 1937, there had been a greater fear of the future than of the present. That was a lack of imagination, and a failure of will and of energy. The conclusion is disconsolate: "Sometimes I am not sure whether I should not have kept silent too, for it seems to me most unlikely that those who were not there will ever understand."

Many witnesses, Elie Wiesel notably among them, have doubted whether anyone who did not live through the Nazi period as a Jew can understand it. Lasson is perhaps too supine to attract the necessary empathy; but the caution contained in his denial of reality outlasts him. His choice to stay was wholly grounded in the culture of German Jews and the society they had enjoyed for at least a century, and it was not a despicable surrender nor an "almost inexplicable" collapse, whatever his defects of character may have been. Nor is guilt afterwards valid because unavoidable.

DREADFUL THINGS in contemporary reality do not become any less dreadful when described but can then be seen instead for what they are, as in the example of a Solzhenitsyn, a Pasternak. In relating the inner distress of his main character to the externals of the situation, Walter Laqueur has avoided that tone of disturbance so dominating in fiction, and created a genuine public theme. The force of the Russian masters is not to be found in *The Missing Years*, but the novel does have a central moral stand, that those who cannot help their mistakes do not thereby deserve blanket condemnation. It is a matter of humanity. Nobody forfeits dignity by the mere historical accident of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

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Gay Clifford

Conjunction

At night, when the ward was more or less quiet,
she sat writing a letter.
It was a cold winter and most of the patients were dying.
The young were away at the war, or else in hiding.
The lamp was shaded, the light golden.
She wore a long grey cotton dress
and yellow hair drawn to her neck.
It was a love letter.

After the cries, complaints, demands
were comforted, she would write:
"I think of your voice when you speak
laughing, or sing. Once you were
in the next room and I heard you
talk to the cat. I am so happy."
He wondered how she could hear such sounds
above the whining summons, death rattles.

She changed dressings where the ward smelled thick;
gangrene. She soaked bandages off ruined skin.
"Your knees and shoulders are like wet stones,
the skin is so fine and taut. Horses run
under my hands as I touch it. When you were
digging, your back reflected the sun. I love you."
He tried to think how it was she could see
wounds and pus, and also that supple glint.

The constant thing was the pans, all the liquids
viscous or stinking, seepage of bodies. She cleaned up,
washed her hands, and picked up her pen. "I loved
the mornings we lay together, the sheets soaked beneath us,
and laughed and talked, and then bathed together.
I am smiling as I write this."
He puzzled about her conjunctions
but was delighted to do so.

She amazed him, holding so much in eye and mind
and not distracted: she loved his body precisely,
where bodies were vast and monstrous.
She would not have seen this as paradox.

It is not clear which should be most admired:
she for imagining him, the exact form of their love,
while she worked with those in dissolution;
or he, for imagining her, trying to know how she wrote
in a place, among things, that he found only repulsive.

She finished the letter and sealed it
and wrote his name on the front.
Then stood up, put it in the pocket
of the grey cotton dress, and went to give it to him.
It is not important that he too had died
by the time she reached his bed.

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Peter Redgrove

Earth Shakes Away its Dead like Crumbs from a Cloth

They have smoothed their mounds down,
The dead, they have healed the soil and gone;
All is smooth lawn, a trifle long.

Where there was once an orchard of stone,
They have departed, however it was done,
Leaving behind a long seeding lawn

That works in the wind like television;
Viewless runners sprint through grass pictures;
The prints of an invisible force flying,

Every feather-beat distinct in the grain
Of winnowing stalk, each shadowing blade.
They have picked up their skeleton,

The people of clay, they have whetted their bone,
Plucked up their gravestones and scythed the lawn;
I cannot tell how it was done;

All made into grass, a little long.
They have pulled up their static stones,
Their texts, and tucked them under their arms,

They have gone off like borrowers in the evening,
In the twilight returning dull thick tomes,
I wish I knew how it was done,

The graven texts gone.
All that is left is a living lawn
In which I can't tell where who was lain,

Or whether or how he is coming again,
The writing gone. Shadows hunt on the wind,
Calf-deep in the cool grass I could be stung

By the shadows of snakes, by the skimming pictures
Healed into parks; my feet laved in soft grasses
I wade through the green streams.

Where are they hiding? I want to meet them
Now, before they are departed and quite gone.
Will they not be clean

And cool, like this wind-driven lawn,
And like the wind flying, into the unknown,
Not by still text kept down, or solemn stone?

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My South African Relations

By Gerda Cohen

COMING FROM mean little England, I was quite unprepared for dinner at the Goldbergs. First the drive up, their mock-Moorish villa almost aerial, quivering in the mauve thin light of Pretoria. Vast fleshy creepers overhung the drive, so fecund that if you pricked them, purple and orange juice would spurt out. Can this really be the Goldbergs, who own a modest pharmacy downtown? But yes, a wrought-iron sign proclaims *Shalom*, lit by Georgian coach lanterns. Leah Goldberg enfolds me, her tan, her voice, brilliant as metal. Other couples press forward, warm and vivid as the creepers. "You've lived in Israel? You know Hebrew?" Henceforward everyone will practise their Hebrew on me.

I am dazed by the splendour of their Friday evening table, heaped with Hanepoot grapes, spiky with arrangements of protea ("our national flowers", explains cousin Dave, who is the patriot of the family). Old Dutch display cabinets exhibit African gods hacked out of stinkwood. They regard the Sabbath, inscrutable. Course followed course, brought in by two Cape Coloured maids. When the maids talk, I notice all their front teeth are missing. Dave Goldberg explained: Coloureds often had their teeth drawn. "It's a craze, don't ask me why. Goddam staff is a luxury, I'm telling you. But these days God knows it's a *mitzve* to employ staff."

Everyone agreed. Black unemployment was a threat. In a curious hush, our host poured the Paarl Riesling '76 to go with the *gefillte* fish. "Delicious", someone purred, and Leah rejoined, "Blacks take a year to get it just right." I had naively assumed she did the cooking. Conversation grew louder, uproarious even, over the Cape Burgundy and *boeuf*, because each guest was on a different diet, causing much confusion among the maids, who served Low Cholesterol to the Strict Kosher and presented one ample lady with the High Calorie meant for an obvious case of anorexia. "Why can't they *ever* get it right?" shrilled Mrs G. as the maids vanished. "Coloureds are reckoned to be quicker than Blacks. I don't know.... My *kaffir* cook was a gem. Remember him, in the old days? When the children were here...."

A painful silence intervened. People stared down at their glistening mounds of food. "When the children were here...." Looking round, I saw in some embarrassment that the stout lady was in tears; her husband patted her enormous shoulder. Another couple wept quietly into the monogrammed table napkins. Leah suddenly rounded on me. "I hear from our daughter in Croydon, England is more racist than South Africa. So why did she go, *heh*?" The ample lady, calm now, obliged me to admit that England *did* have racist elements; somehow this made everyone look happier. Still, how could they convince the *children*? For almost all had left the country. Gone to Australia, Houston, Haifa. Not a couple there had a grandchild nearer than six thousand miles. "Jesus, the fares! And do they like Croydon? They hate it", laughs Dave, tipping a goblet of Boschendal Rosé. His big arm, bulging with golf muscle, shook slightly. "I hear the Levys are coming back home from Canada. Couldn't stand the cold, man!"

As we bade each other *shabbat shalom*, several couples invited me to dine. Their warmth flowed into the night like the musky scent of loquat. Through the lighted window I could see the maids bent over a mountain of dirty plates. "I wouldn't trust them with a dish-washer", said Leah, hugging me yet again, "They'd feel so guilty if they broke it."

THERE ARE ONLY 120,000 Jews in South Africa, fewer than in Austria before the *Anschluss*, and yet—there *must* be more. The intensity, the conviction, the lowest inter-marriage rate of any community outside Israel, it all adds up to a feeling of numerical strength and opulent unease. Families remain as close as mine was fifty years ago. I discover distant uncles in places like Boksburg, full of hot metal roofs and abandoned mine workings, with a neat, discreet synagogue next to the Liquor Superama. Most South African Jews derive originally from Lithuania; whole villages were transplanted, at the turn of the century. They fled from pogroms to the "*goldene medina*." From Poland to polo in one generation—it's a cliché grown sour. They worked hard and made good, like my remote cousins in Linksfield; so remote I had never heard of them before, but did it matter? All South African Jews are somehow related. "You should visit them", everyone said, "Maxine and

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Myron have really made it! She was a typist for years, managed in a tiny flat in Yeoville without any staff—and now—you should see their place!" Other cousins corroborated: "Myron never got into 'varsity; the other brothers went to Wits, but he never went to 'varsity. Just worked himself up, selling three-piece suites to the Blacks. . . ."

Reluctantly, I phoned. Perhaps we could meet for tea? "Tea?" Maxine filled the monosyllable with pain and incredulity. "You must stay the weekend, everyone does." No excuse would prevail. She would fetch me. "Forget about the bus, sweetie, it's for non-whites really. You see a white bus once in an age, and anyway Linksfield doesn't rely on public transport." I search for a polite evasion. Too hot for travelling, not the heat one would expect in February. "It's cooler in Linksfield", Maxine assured me, "coolest part of Johannesburg."

HEAT HAD BEEN building up, a thundery tense heat which prickled through Saturday afternoon. Otherwise it would have been idyllic by the pool, hearing the plash and cry of children so blond their skin shone like peppermint in the blue swimming-pool water. "My boys have such a delicate complexion", Maxine told me, "I drench them in *Aqua Sport* or they'd shrivel right up." Maxine and Myron sat in the shade recovering from lunch. "Our boys go to King David, of course, but I'm telling you, they are so *blond*—people take them for Afrikaners! Why send them to *King David*, people ask, they've got *Voortrekker* blood—" Myron interrupted her. "It's a joke, see. Our family originate from Riga. Still", he lies back in the deck chair, quietly proud, "our boys do have very fair skin." We lay enveloped in the mounting heat. A tense hush held the long daggers of willow which overhung their yard. We hear the servants laugh by the dustbins under the willow. "Blacks don't feel the heat." Maxine got up, soft and hospitable, to show me their view. Her plump little hand led me, "How's that for a view, heh?" All Johannesburg spread out, quivering. Its hot metal roofs and crawling roads seem to palpitate like an animal chained in the sun. "That's why we moved to Linksfield, for the view." They missed Yeoville and friendly Jewish shops; had never dreamed of Linksfield; but after Soweto. . . property prices fell. Myron, who sold furniture to the Black locations, could now afford Linksfield. Beyond their mansion snaked private roads stiff with Corinthian porticos, the bitter yellow of canary vine on Bankers' Regency, and no one about except Black men polishing limousines.

"Bye for now." Myron heaved himself up. "I'm going to do accounts." Maxine stared at him, palpably shaken. . . . "Accounts, heh? And what about the ***Bubah***—it's your Saturday for visiting." Myron wiped his face. "Didn't I visit her on *yom-tov*?", sweat blotching his beige safari suit. We can hear thunder roll far away on the veldt. "She's *your* mother—" Maxine almost screamed, "I'm not visiting two Saturdays in a row." Perspiration trickled down her bat-wing polaroids. Myron, ever practical, brought out a suggestion. "Take our guest along with you", appealing to me dumbly, "and show her the Jewish Aged Home. It's like a five-star hotel, man", his big palms open, imploring me, "You should see how we treat our old folk. Nothing's too good, we pay out millions of rands. . . ."

But of course I would go along. At once the Tswana maids are summoned to haul the children out, comb their flaxen hair, dress them in powder blue, while another Tswana polished Maxine's Toyota. The servants stand grinning as we spurt away. "They're *devoted*", Maxine swung downtown, "God, were they scared of being 'endorsed out' to some goddam homeland, till Myron fixed their papers. . . ."

THERE IS HARDLY a soul about, except patient women queueing for the Non-White bus, and the odd drunk sprawled on a grass verge. "Blacks get liver disease", Maxine swung into the Witwatersrand Jewish Aged Home. "They swill *kaffir* beer." A tall Zulu opened the gate, wishing us "Good *Shabbos*!" I had not expected so monumental a building. The "Jewish Aged Home" is dominant, like a fort or shrine. Beneath the monumental doorway, a small hunched figure awaited our approach, and it burst into vehement Yiddish. The tirade rose to a wail, plaintive as only Yiddish can be. "Fifty years in South Africa", Maxine groaned, "and she knows only Yiddish!"

When the boys present chocolate, grandma drums on the box with enraged, arthritic knuckles. "Take a look round", Maxine urged me, "we pay out millions of rands on this place." A host of Black waiters are setting out crystal and damask for dinner. Along the glassy corridor, Black nurses wheeled tiny shrunken inmates with big Lithuanian noses. It smelt of disinfectant and chicken soup. "Chicken soup every *Shabbos*", the Manager met me, delighted to exhibit his Zulu chef making *Apfel strudel*, the infirmary where Black nurses jollied sad old men. "Just like your National Health service", the Manager smiled at me, "Coloured staff everywhere. But ours are highly trained. We demand the standard of a five-star hotel. Unfortunately, unfortunately", his voice sank, "we don't get enough visitors. Jewish families emigrate, relatives don't come . . . . On *Seder* night, half the residents had no visitors."

Maxine was already waiting in the grandiose foyer, swinging her car keys violently. "Fifty years in South Africa", Maxine cried, "and she doesn't

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know to play bridge yet!" Outside, the heat had been gathering to intense stillness. The whole city felt charged and explosive. Thunder broke overhead. "Thank God it's Myron's Saturday next week." As the first drops spat, vapour came steaming off the old age home, so it looked more than ever like some huge shrine being boiled in a bizarre ritual. Rain hurtles out of the sky. "Get into the car, kids", Maxine shrieks, "you'll get wet!" But they can't hear for the roar of falling water.

BROUGHT UP ON timid Home Counties Judaism, I am altogether dazzled by the Hebrew Congregation at Sea Point, Cape Town. Over a thousand, surely, burnished and loud as parakeets, Their Friday night fills Sea Point, muting the crash of surf. "Why so many of us? *Aagh*, man, look at the rabbi." Congregants love being castigated by Rabbi Rosen. "His Oxford accent—divine, *eh*? Why don't they educate our kids to speak Oxford?"

Congregants flow out of *shul*, their after-shave lotion scenting the mixture of warm salt air and concrete. Sea Point is made of concrete, block upon block crowding for an expensive view of the sea. Those with the best view get a clearer sight of Robben Island. Palms toss along the prom, their fronds stiff as eye-lashes gummed by the salt breeze. In the supermarket, poppy-seed plaits are piled high for *yom-tov*. Children in blazers go to the Herzlia Jewish Day School. Herzlia, yes, it all reminds me of Israeli suburbia. "Except that Sea Point is far more Zionist", Rabbi Rosen permitted himself a smile. "In fact I would say that South African Jewry is the keenest, most committed community anywhere in the Diaspora." I had to admire the way he said "Diaspora"; only a public school man could achieve that supercilious edge. "Being keen about Zionism confers a kind of political absolution on Jews here, allowing them to enjoy the flesh in Johannesburg while their heart and soul are dedicated to Jerusalem." Incidentally, as he reminded me, "I draw the biggest congregation in the Southern hemisphere." He certainly had a tan, a turn of rhetoric, of unusual allure. "Oh they love me. But I intend to leave, and frankly I pity them. Jews in South Africa are obliged to abdicate a destiny."

What about the ones who rebel? "They get caught." In silence, the rabbi fetched a tray of iced lime. "The maid's out." He offered me a cool glass. "You realise of course that individual Jews have risked everything. In vain, I might add. Dissidents are more numerous than one would imagine. I am in touch with five Jews under house-arrest in my 'parish' alone, and there are others under Banning Orders."

Suddenly he looked lost, an undergraduate faced with questions not in the curriculum. "What can one say to them?" he asked me, "in all honesty, what?"

On the way back through Sea Point, I notice how the place has emptied. Friday night congregants are safe at home. Windows melt into the dusk like luminous pink fondant, floating in warmth and over-rich cooking odours. While down below, along the concrete prom, slouch Coloured men, aimless. Sea Point has nowhere open to Coloureds. I watch them idle, avoiding the neon welcome of *kosher* hotels.

FOR A LONG WHILE I thought the Feldmans' daughter must be dead. They never mentioned her. Dr Feldman went about his work at the hospital with severe dedication, revered by his Black staff. The buxom Black Sisters couldn't do enough for Dr Feldman; indeed he was their favourite among the many Jewish doctors. "Shame", Sister Ngwame said to me, "about his daughter. . . ." Oh really? No one knew precise details. Or perhaps the shock and hurt of the Banning had silenced them. My relatives greet the Feldmans warily, as though after a bereavement. "Terrible", mutters my aunt when we are out of earshot, "to think how he's worked for the bloody Blacks." They avoid mentioning the Feldmans' daughter, as if she had died in painful circumstances. "Doctor always hoping his daughter would follow on", Sister Ngwame clucked, "Shame. . . . God gives heavy trouble."

After this, the Feldmans' daughter took on a heroic quality for me. To rebel in South Africa, however foolishly, argues courage. So when an acquaintance arranged a meeting, I went in considerable excitement. We drove there at night, because the Banning Order kept her in from 6 pm to 6 am.

"You'll find Tina a bit . . . edgy", said my companion. North Johannesburg sped by, exuding its special kind of fear. Villas loom out of the night, so tight-shuttered they seem empty until guard dogs begin barking and barking into the dry electric dark. Our headlamps catch a glint of barbed wire, driveways swollen with begonias like blood blisters. "Here we are." But surely it's the wrong house? Every window is lit, flaunting a lack of privacy. "I feel safer this way." Tina drew me indoors. "Your friend will stay in the car; a Banned person cannot associate with more than one other person at a time." Tina is short and plain. "D'you take sugar?", serving me tepid Nescafé. I long to shut the curtains. Unseen neighbours must be watching our every move. We face each other across a picnic table laden with cigarette stubs, and chat about London theatre, womens' lib, sun-tan lotion—everything except her ordeal. Minutes tick away.

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The room is full of clocks.

Finally the question blurts itself out: "Why are you Banned?" "I have no idea." Tina really is plain, the type of girl you find selling *Peace News* on a nasty wet day. How does she earn a living? "I lost my research job, of course. No university, no library, no factory, no publisher, can employ a Banned person. Would you like some more Nescafé?"

Her tone is even, with a slight hysteric edge. "Take a ginger nut; I'm afraid they've gone a bit soft. I'm doing a *B.Lit.* by correspondence through UNISA. Though of course I can't attend study groups."

Her eyes rove about until they alight on my hand-bag. Evenly, with that slight hysteric upturn, Tina enquires, "Have you by any chance got a recording device in there? I mean who *are* you, anyway? Show me some proof of identity." All I can dig out is a London membership card for the National Trust. "Oh my God, you *English*!" Tina threw up her hands. Nail-bitten, they remind me that Feldman's unlikeable daughter is being punished for us, the acquiescent. "Your Nescafé has gone cold." Tina slops a refill into the chipped mug. "You English are priceless", examining the membership card with incredulity, "not even a photo. . . . Anyone could forge that. D'you know if a Black gets stopped without his reference book he goes to jail on the spot? . . . ." I did know. In fact Dr Feldman at the Black hospital had been a good informant. "A lot of your father's patients . . ." I began. Tina cut me short. "It's irrelevant. What he's doing for Blacks is *irrelevant*!" Her doughy little face had set hard. "There isn't a single Black doctor in that hospital." Wishing the curtains were drawn, I can only mumble that at least many are Jewish. "I don't consider myself Jewish." Tina consulted her watch. "Ten o'clock. Four years and two hundred days until my Banning Order expires."

Perhaps, I hunt for some comfort, the régime would alter before then. What did she think of their multi-racial sports policy?

"A cherry on the arsenic." Tina held open the front door. "Tell my father to emigrate."

AT THE GOLDBERGS' on my final Friday night we talk about Israel. Everyone felt glad, relations between Pretoria and Jerusalem had never been more cordial. Beleaguered South Africa would strengthen military ties with her beleaguered counterpart at the other end of a hostile continent. Leah announces, "I'm working at the Fed every single night—I haven't got a moment to myself." Couples nod their approval; the "Fed", the Zionist Federation, confers absolution. The two inscrutable

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Coloured maids bring in dessert. Mangoes, succulent and overwhelming.

"What, you've never had mango?" Juice oozes from the cut orange flesh. "She's never eaten mango!" They bite and watch me, lavishing their own enjoyment. Juice spills on to the damask, but the maids hasten to mop up. "So who did you see in Cape Town? The Gordons? The Truform Gordons, who run the garment industry?" I mention Rabbi Rosen. "Zionist fervour seems to confer a kind of absolution on the spirit of South African Jewry, enabling them to enjoy the flesh"....

"Look", said Dave Goldberg in genuine bewilderment, "what d'you want of us? You want martyrs? We've had enough, man...." Everyone had forgotten the Rivonia Treason trial, with Jews exiled, savagely sentenced. "My distant cousin Denis hasn't seen his wife for twelve years. Security keep on refusing her a permit to visit him in jail. Much bloody good, man, stuck in bloody jail." Goldberg could hardly speak. He stared fixedly out of his mock-Moorish salon, back turned to the empty bedrooms where the King David school-blazers hung still in their luxury wardrobe suites.

VOLUPTUOUS, GARISH, an exciting smell of pomade or the Big Cat cages; "I love that smell", Dr Bloch glittered at me, "African smell." She swept through the clinic her coat flashing whiter than white among the mass of African mothers. "I love them", Dr Bloch shouts at me over the noise, "Wonderful people", patting babies done up in bonnets woolly pink and white, their eyes enormous with apprehension. Plumped on the scales for weighing, they squall, and the women shake in laughter, big cheap ear-rings and round sway of hip, all one voluptuous movement.

"Fecundity!" Dr Bloch shut her office door. "Fecundity—important, and how! So, of course, we encounter resistance to family planning. Rural Blacks still have eight or ten children. Here on the Rand it's down to five or six." I wondered about Dr Bloch herself, a dominant blonde with lean tennis legs. Did she have a family? I hesitate to ask. There isn't a chance anyway, as she perched on a desk volleying facts at me with a brisk backhand. At the last census in 1970, the government found a Black birth-rate of 43 per thousand of the population, compared to a White birth-rate of 23.2. In the meantime, infant mortality rates have been declining thanks to government health care. "Work that one out!" She leaned forward, as if to acknowledge a bond between us hitherto ignored: "Just for your personal interest, the *Jewish* birth-rate has fallen to lowest place." A slight pause, then we revert to tribal society. Traditional birth-control: so long as a baby is suckled—no sex. Before marriage—no sex. Now the taboos have gone. "Tribal breakdown", said Dr Bloch earnestly, "meant the Government simply had to intervene, for their own good. Of course the Blacks wouldn't hear of it. They always suspect a political motive. Anyway, at last we got a national programme started. In five years we've opened 983 family-planning clinics. Fantastic, heh?" Ardour lit up her lean freckly face, her tomboy cut coarsened with bleach.

"Come next door and meet Sister Rachel. She's wonderful, a Sotho who speaks five native languages. Our aim is for Blacks to run the clinics entirely on their own, under white supervision of course."

In the examination room, amid much giggling and coy laughter, mothers are being interviewed by Sister Rachel. Very calm, she wears the hideous maroon beret and sky-blue uniform denoting senior rank. She is like the inscrutable figurines in African souvenir shops. "Ask Sister anything you want", Dr Bloch swept off to insert intra-uterine devices, "I'll collect you for lunch."

There is a perceptible easing of the atmosphere. Mothers giggle again. "Doctor very nice Jewish lady", a nurse chatted with me, "Shame, doctor love kids but she don't never marry." One by one the women enter, women bounteous of hip, bursting with fertility and plastic bangles. To my surprise, most of them receive a hormone injection in the buttock. "Is our main method", Sister Rachel enlightened me, "main birth control for Blacks. You see ladies need attend the clinic only four times a year for their Depo jab." But what about side-effects? Such long-term hormone contraceptives have been discouraged in Britain due to unpleasant side-effects. Sister Rachel considered this in silence. The other nurses watch her. At last she said, "Englishmen are educated. Black men want babies. Husband don't allow his wife prevent the baby get conceived. If husband find out, he throw Pills down the toilet." At this everyone split with laughter, crying "*pilisi* down the toilet!" until Sister said *hush*. "Black men want children so much, they won't pay '*lobola*' unless the girl prove her fertility."

Suddenly I cannot bear to look at Sister Rachel. Her impassive features sag like old rubber. She gave a shrug, sunk under that grotesque beret. "Before, it was terrible disgrace to have illegitimate child." Her beret had slipped sideways. "Now is nothing. We lost our respect."

In token of hospitality, Dr Bloch took me for a drive around the Black township. Small boys pelt alongside, waving in the swirl of dried-blood-colour dust thrown up by the car. "See how they know me—" she waves at teeth, eyes, shining through the plasma-red dust cloud. Pimville disappointed me. I had envisaged grim squalor, not the row upon row of identical houses which could be some dreary council estate in Dagenham or Hull, except for the resplendent African sunshine and the people who grin their warmth from scruffy triangles of maize. "Bet you thought it would be terrible", Dr Bloch

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flung me a roguish twinkle, "anti-Apartheid rubbish! Look, they've got street lighting, drains, some even built on a bathroom." Her strong bleached jaw bent over the wheel as we spurt away from Pimville, across the frontier of railway track and factories belching yellow smoke, into the wide white boulevards fronded with acacia. "Ma will worry if I'm late. I dash home for lunch to see my baby."

Dr Bloch drove at speed up Balmoral Avenue, Braemar Avenue—all the roads had Scottish names—and braked under the dry rustling gum trees of "Craigiemore." There on the terrace stood a perambulator. No mere pram—a perambulator in cream and ivory. "Come see my baby." Tender, she gathered him up. "Did he go sleepy-byes?" He is perhaps 18 months old, glossy dark as a roasted coffee bean. "Josh-*ua*, Josh-*ua*, oh what a lovely squash-you-are." She untied his cambric sunbonnet and nuzzled her nose into the springy black fuzz. Old Mrs Bloch had come out on to the verandah. "Why so late? Everything got spoilt already." We shake hands, but I notice both are really intent on Joshua. Old Mrs Bloch had a camel face, strong and inelegant. Wiry bleached hairs underline her chin. Together they jounce the boy indoors, "Lobster mousse, Joshua, your favourite guava jelly." Mrs Bloch heaped our plates. "I'm serving, it's Ellen's day off. Ellen is our live-in maid, a Tswana girl." Wedged in his baby-chair, Joshua kept flicking mousse at the furniture. Some went on the bookshelf, on the medical encyclopaedias and a complete edition of the Left Book Club. "Ma used to be a great Lefty, marched in the big demonstrations, back in the Fifties." Mrs Bloch groaned, "Sure, in the Fifties, when you *could* march." Her daughter explains, "Demonstrations are illegal, you realise, they stir up trouble." Meanwhile Joshua lobs a blob of guava jelly on to the complete works of Tolstoy. "Bad, bad", Dr Bloch cuddles the little brown fist, "Ellen going to be so cross with you. Ellen"—she cleaned up the jelly—"gave birth to him when she was working for us. Most of their first births are illegitimate, you know. They think nothing of it." "Nothing", grunts old Mrs Bloch, "like *animals* they are!" "Come on, Ma, don't be prejudiced."

Together, fondly, they watch Joshua trying to wriggle out of his chair, his fat black toes braced with vexation. "When he's four", Dr Bloch informed me, "he'll have to go to the Reserve. Miles away in Bophutatswana. This is a White area, see. Non-Whites can't live here. It's quite usual, staff sending their kids back to the country." Somehow I feel lost for reply. Mrs Bloch began clearing the plates, grimly satisfied that Joshua had eaten more than any of us. "Some appetite—*k'nayn a horra*", she cried in Yiddish, "He'll grow up to be a big strong terrorist." We all laugh. It seems the only thing to do.

Letters between

ROBERT PRIEBSCH and ELIAS VON STEINMEYER

Selected and edited by AUGUST CLOSS

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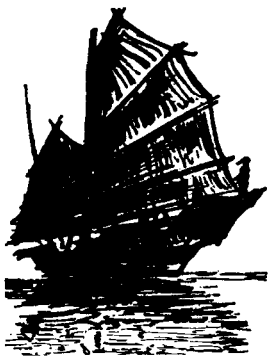
EAST & WEST

Open Questions before Chinese Walls

By Marcel Reich-Ranicki



HOW MANY inhabitants are there in the people's Republic of China? Nobody really knows...because the last population census was carried out a quarter of a century ago, in 1953. According to official statistics, the annual growth-rate is 2% . . . but these statistics date back to the year 1965. How high is the present growth-rate now that the government has done everything conceivable to limit the increase in births? Nobody can come up with an answer, and the population can only be roughly estimated. 920 million? or perhaps 940 million? or even 960 million? Ten or twenty million more or less—it doesn't really matter, so they tell me in Peking.

In Shanghai I was interested by the particularly large number of unemployed. There are, I hear, some four to five hundred thousand. Is this really so? On the same day, in another conversation, I am told that this estimate is not incorrect, but "only refers to Shanghai's young people." It is impossible to find out which of these is true. Dr Theo Sommer reports in his recent book *The Chinese Card* that he inquired about the number of radio-sets in China. One source quoted sixty million, another only twenty.

Do the Chinese wish to conceal true statistics? Possibly. However, it is more probable that they don't know the figures themselves. Great though the bureaucracy is in this country (a foreigner notices this even after only a few days), there is very little interest in statistics. Indeed, can one even trust the few official statistics and disclosures that are made available?

The editorial office of the Peking *People's Daily* (which has a circulation of "well over six million") has admitted that in the past it has simply invented news in order to portray life in China in a rosier light. When? During the notorious "Cultural Revolution" between 1966 and 1976? No, not only then. They officially admit that similar practices were still going on in 1979. Why, then, should we believe that the *People's Daily*, which is directly controlled by the Central Committee of the Party, is the only Chinese organisation which saw fit until the end of the '70s to spread incorrect information? And what proof is there that things are in fact any different one short year later, and will be different in the future?

Anyway, we really must marvel at many Western journalists. After what is generally a very short stay, with a programme arranged by one or other of the Chinese authorities, and having had no opportunity to converse with the population, they apparently have no qualms about making pronouncements on the internal political situation of the country and its economic achievements and going on to inform us about China's industrial production, the gross national income, and the growth rate of agricultural production!

OF COURSE WE ARE permitted to travel around. But in this gigantic country there are only a few cities which are open to foreigners. Anyone who wishes to visit a city which is not on the usual programme is instructed that this city is basically uninteresting, that there are no proper hotels there, or that poor road and rail connections make it difficult to reach. This could all be true.

Whenever we stop we are allowed to take a look around, but always accompanied by one of the interpreters assigned to us, on whose assistance we are in fact dependent. They are reliable and attentive guides, and they do not like to leave us on our own.

We are permitted to (in fact we are supposed to) visit all kinds of places—factories and universities, scientific institutes and collective farms, museums and department stores. Only the ones that are "worth visiting", of course. And it is the relevant Chinese authority that decides which places are

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This is the third of a series of articles on how the West views present-day China. The Australian report: Beverley Hooper, "Upstairs Downstairs in 'New China'"; the British report, Anthony Thwaite, "Experts for Export." An Italian report by the sinologist Lucien Bianco will be published in a forthcoming issue.

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worthy. There appear to be good reasons for everything.

PEKING is dark and dusty, a sad city. In summer, they tell me, it looks a bit more inviting. But it is hard to imagine that the great residential blocks, which regrettably all too clearly bear the stamp of the Soviet architectural style of the 1950s, could be any more attractive in the warm season. They have been sparing with everything here—with paint and building materials, with taste and imagination.

However, these depressing grey blocks are merely concrete islands in an ocean, an ocean of clay. Most of the inhabitants of Peking live in low, miserable clay huts. There is no main drainage. Are there water-flush toilets in these cold, rented barracks? Yes, but as a rule several dwellings, often six or eight, share one communal toilet. It is a similar situation with regard to kitchens—only the privileged élite have their own.

The few main roads are asphalted and even lighted to some extent. The others are only roughly surfaced and any illumination is merely token. The traffic does not make the city any brighter, but in fact just makes it more eerie, for the moving vehicles only have a parking-light on.

But what about the cyclists? The old cliché comparing the Chinese to an army of busy blue ants is not so far from the mark, but in the big cities it applies more to the cyclists than to the pedestrians. Since the buses do not run very frequently and in consequence are alarmingly overcrowded, since there are no private cars in present-day China (there really is not a single one), and since hardly anybody can reach their place of work on foot, life without a bicycle is inconceivable. Whether they are waiters or artists, street-sweepers or students, washerwomen or scientists—everybody relies on their precious and rather expensive bicycles.

You can see the consequences of this anywhere in Peking at any time of the day: the cyclists very rarely manage to avoid rubbing shoulders with each other. There is of course a simple reason why they create such a disturbing impression. The Chinese may have invented paper, printing and gunpowder thousands of years ago, but it appears that a quite simple gadget like the bicycle-lamp is still unknown to them.

If you want to buy a bicycle, you must first have a voucher. You also need one for rice and sugar, fat and soap, shoes and textiles. The Chinese are not bothered about fashion. Everybody, young and old, men and women, wears the same (usually blue, sometimes olive-green) uniform, the jacket which we call the Mao-jacket. This, I am informed, is not at all correct, because it was not introduced by Mao, but much earlier by Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Chinese Republic. I am reminded of this so often and so forcibly that I finally get the point. This is not a matter of a piece of clothing. Something more important is at issue here—namely Mao.

Since everybody is dressed exactly the same and everybody protects themselves against the cold in the same way (no overcoats, but presumably long combinations, vests and pullovers—all underneath that monotonous uniform), one cannot tell people's occupations from their appearance in the street. University professors look the same as dustmen, writers no different to the workers who are improving the road-surfaces. And their incomes differ as little as their wardrobes. Schoolteachers, engineers, and lecturers (under the age of forty) receive approximately the same as taxi-drivers, street-sweepers, or unskilled labourers.

IN THE CENTRE OF THE CITY OF Peking there is a structure which, despite its simplicity, exerts an even greater fascination over Western journalists than those Imperial palaces, those arches and temples, which were spared by the Cultural Revolution. Tourists go on pilgrimage there. Reporters from all over the world stand in astonishment and admiration. They know: the construction is a symbol. And many Western visitors think it a sign of progress and even of freedom, or at least a sign of hope. I mean the so-called "Wall of Democracy."

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A carefully delineated—perhaps some hundred or two hundred square metres—is given over to complaints and suggestions, to the wishes of the dissatisfied and perhaps even to dissident attacks. What one is not permitted to do elsewhere in China, either in a printed newspaper or over a radio transmitter, one is permitted to do here: namely, to speak one's mind.

Is one really permitted to do so? Are the articles censored before one can stick them up on the walls? Are those whose articles the Party finds foolish or damaging later taken to task about them? And how does this happen? What happens to the authors of unwelcome articles when they request a voucher from their unit, from their residents' committee, or from their works committee, for a pair of shoes, say, or a bicycle?

I receive vague, evasive, or contradictory answers to all these questions. One thing is sure: many articles—and this is also true of Wall Newspapers in other cities—have been forbidden from the outset or have been removed after a short time. Is this oasis of freedom, then, merely a mirage? Another thing is sure: wherever one needs a Wall of Democracy, there is no democracy in the first place. This bill-stickered wall does not, as naive Western journalists believe, symbolise future freedoms, but rather current unfreedoms.

In spite of the unfavourable weather, I find hundreds of Chinese standing on the broad pavement in front of the Wall. They are not bothered by the Europeans with their cameras and notebooks; they read the numerous articles seriously and attentively. Now and then they nod, obviously in agreement with what they find written there.

I have watched people staring at a Wall spellbound and full of hope once before, and they were also inclined to attribute a similar mythical power to the place. Despite all the superficial differences, the Peking Wall of Democracy somehow reminds me of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. Here too the people are turning to "someone" from whom they expect help. Both walls can work miracles. The basic assumption is, of course, that those who read or pray there must also have faith—in the Party or in God.[1]

THERE IS ANOTHER WALL you should visit, the celebrated Great Wall of China. How did it become such a favourite theme in world literature (usually celebrated by European poets who have never been there)? Obviously, the Wall of China is a symbol, a landmark, extremely evocative and easy to take over as a theatrical back-drop. But what does it symbolise? Narrow-mindedness, barbarity, naivety, fear, arrogance? Security, or lack of security? It depends on who is using the motif. The old structure is like a screen on to which the contents of the author's unconscious are projected.

So I stand beneath the broad, high wall which winds through a harsh mountain landscape not far from Peking and disappears somewhere in the misty distance. It is cold, a raw wind is blowing. But I am not tempted to think about literature, not about Kafka nor about Max Frisch. This Chinese Wall also reminds me of another, no, of two other walls—one in Warsaw, erected in 1941 and knocked down between 1944 and 1945, and the one in Berlin, erected in 1961 and still not dismantled.

One should not forget that these two German monuments are remarkably similar to one another. Who knows if it was not the same architects who designed them? The Wall of China shows a superior feeling for style and somewhat more imagination. But the crucial difference is something else: one of them dates back to the darkest Middle Ages, the other two are products of our own enlightened century.

ONE IS ALSO OBLIGED to visit the summer palace of the Imperial family on the edge of the city of Peking. The description is misleading because it is much more than simply a building: there are many palaces and bridges, pagodas and artificial lakes, also a covered promenade, almost a kilometre in length, along the bank of the lake, decorated with colourful representations of mythological scenes. (The most wonderful thing: a marble ship with stone paddle-wheels, a place for summer parties which an Empress had built at the turn of the century.)

A great deal of what one sees here was built, or at least rebuilt or renovated, towards the end of the 19th century or a bit later. It reminds one of the sets for Puccini's *Turandot*. I look inquiringly at the Chinese art-expert who is accompanying me. He is silent; his job is to provide me with information; value-judgments are not his bowl of rice. He seems embarrassed. It makes me think of the castles of King Ludwig II of Bavaria. Is it any solace to know that the crowned heads here also could not distinguish between art and artifice?

The Heavenly Temple is recommended to me, a Peking landmark standing on a gentle hillock in the centre of the city. It is a circular structure surrounded by white marble terracing, originally built in the 15th century, but burnt down in 1889 (struck by lightning). What we have before us, then, is a reconstruction. This, according to the guide-book,

[1] Before I left China, the Wall Newspaper was demolished. "No", I was told, "not entirely demolished, but simply reduced in size and moved"—from the centre to a rather remote park.... That's what happens everywhere. Anyone who really wants to have faith will go on believing.

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is "the most beautiful temple-site in China." My European friend, a reliable expert on China, goes much further than that: for him it is "the most magnificent building in the world."

Yes, it really is very beautiful, the proportions are marvellous, and the colours sumptuous (especially today, with the Peking sky blue and flawlessly clear). But while I stand there in admiration and astonishment, I am suddenly assailed by a vision. I see the wonderful temple in the middle of a Disney landscape: wouldn't this colourfully varnished toy be completely at home there? Naturally I conceal this sacrilegious thought from my Sinophile friend; it would only offend him.

Every work of art is ultimately what the observer makes out of it, what it means to him. Unfortunately I cannot make anything of this unique Heavenly Temple. It may be perfect, but it does not point to anything beyond itself. It has no significance for me; it is—admittedly in a perfect way—alien to me. The most beautiful building in the world?[2]

THERE ARE HARDLY any sights of historical interest in Nanking. The city does have a three-thousand year history, but all that would have been worth seeing has crumbled or been destroyed over the centuries. What is there left for me to do but go to the zoo? It is a gloomy day; nevertheless thousands of adults and children mill about on the paths in front of the cages. Suddenly there is a disturbance; they turn away from the cages, shout something or other, gesticulate. Something is causing a sensation. A lion, a giraffe, a rhinoceros? The sensation is me.

It is true. I seem to be in some competition with the hippos and the giant snakes. Crowds follow me quite unashamedly. They stare at me. I am surrounded. They walk along beside me in astonishment, not bothering to give even the camel a single glance. They evidently want their children to have a vivid and constructive lesson about this strange creature from a remote country. But it would appear they are all peaceful, benevolent folk. They nod at me in a friendly way. They intend me no harm, they are only curious. The sensation, of course, would be even greater if the surprising white long-nosed stranger had blond hair.

The most famous bridge in China is situated near Nanking, crossing the Yangtze Kiang; it is more than six kilometres long, has two levels (one for cars and one for the railway) and seems to me neither original in appearance nor particularly beautiful. Nevertheless there is something here that strikes one as curious at first: a spacious and (by Chinese standards) almost luxuriously furnished reception centre.

The visitor is served tea, in exchange for which he suffers a lengthy lecture about the construction of the bridge. A smartly dressed young lady who speaks only Chinese recites technical information and statistics in a bored voice. I am informed how many tons of steel and cement were required for the building of the bridge. Since I do not know how many tons of steel or cement it takes to build a bridge over the Rhine or the Thames or the Hudson, these superfluous figures, for me at least, mean nothing at all.

However, it is not a question of technology or architecture here, but rather a question of the pride of a nation which is as conscious of its long history as of its unconcealable backwardness. The Russians were to have built the bridge; but then, when the break with Moscow occurred in 1960, they withdrew their technicians who promptly removed such sections as they had already completed. The Chinese stood then on the brink of the void; or, more precisely, on the brink of the murky waters of the great Yangtze Kiang. They decided to go ahead with the bridge—and they emphasise this time and time again—erecting it "without foreign assistance." The construction work lasted for eight

[2] What would I choose if I was asked this question? I suppose it would be Schinkel's theatre in the old Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin.

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years and demanded some terrible sacrifices. (How many people were killed in accidents? "A horrifying number", they told me.) It was necessary to employ draconian methods to complete it all.

As for the steel and the other materials, the statistics do acquire some meaning when one pauses to consider how they were brought here—carried, pushed, or dragged.

SO THAT WAS WHAT IT WAS LIKE in those days? No, that's how it still is today. I wander around the great city of Nanking in the bitter cold (the women and men look misshapen, today they are obviously wearing their long combinations). Few cars are on the streets; bicycles, carts, and wagons everywhere.

Every inhabitant of Nanking, it appears, has something urgent to transport today: boxes and chests, poles and pipes, furniture and food-stuffs. No tractors pull these wagons, no horses or donkeys, just people, men and women, mostly oldsters. I imagine that the materials for the construction of the Chinese Wall were once conveyed in exactly the same way (and, closer to home not unlike the Egyptians and their slaves lugging the stones for the pyramids). Wasn't it the Chinese who invented the hand-cart some 2,000 years ago? Surely a tremendous achievement. But as I watch the dense traffic on the shabby streets of Nanking, I ask myself (quietly) whether the Chinese have improved on this innovatory, practical invention very much in the course of the last two millennia.

NOWADAYS, students from the European West win scholarships to study at the great universities: to study the language, the literature, art and history of China. The régime is keenly interested and treats them well, which means that they live quite differently from their Chinese fellow-students.

They receive grants which are at least double the salary of a Chinese teacher or young university lecturer, and often they receive an additional grant from their own countries. They share rooms in pairs (a Chinese student has to share a medium-sized room with five or seven of his fellows), have warm showers (the others shower cold), and can use the electricity supply whenever and for whatever purpose they wish (Chinese students have the light turned off at 10 p.m. and they are not permitted to plug any electric appliances into the mains). In the eating-hall, tables for foreign students are screened off in a separate part of the hall; as a rule, the foreigners receive the same food, but in the area assigned to them it is much cleaner and more comfortable.

Admittedly, there is no such segregation in toilet facilities. The foreigners can only use the public conveniences. There are separate toilets for each sex, but they generally consist of one large, what you might call communal, room. There are no sit-down cubicles, and even the "thunderboxes" of Europe military latrines are unheard of here.

Women from the West quickly lose their modesty. One young teacher from the Federal Republic assures me that she did not have to use the public toilet because she lived near the university; but nevertheless, caught short on one occasion, she was obliged to make use of the facility. "When I finally did what I had gone there to do, I was immediately surrounded by the Chinese women present. They couldn't take their eyes off me! Obviously they had never seen a white woman relieve herself before . . . Whatever did they expect?"

A French colleague supplements the story. When she went into the university toilet to change her tampon, she was quickly surrounded by Chinese who even went so far as to call in the girls who happened to be out in the corridor at the time. They all looked on dumbfounded; they had never seen anything like it before.

THE STREETS AND SQUARES, the stations and airports, the buses and the steamers, the shops and the stores, the tea-shops and the restaurants, the cinemas and theatres—everything in China is overcrowded. But foreigners suffer little on account of this. In the larger stores there are special sales rooms for foreign-currency-bringers from Europe and America. In the restaurants,which do not look exactly appetising, the dining-room for foreigners is usually on one of the top floors. The tables are laid with table-cloths; it all looks cleaner, and the prices are disproportionately higher. The generous meal, for which a Chinese person pays up to four yuan, costs a visitor from the West well over twenty yuan. The members of Third World embassies get off rather more lightly, but they still have to pay considerably more than the locals. Even "luxury restaurants" are poorly furnished and, to put it mildly, uninviting. The service is quick, but they expect guests to leave immediately after they have finished their last course.

So I am rushed off quickly to the station, and as a privileged visitor go through a special side-entrance leading to a waiting-room (exclusively for foreigners and high dignitaries). From there through another door, and a short corridor leads straight to the carriage for the "soft" class.

The train from Nanking to Shanghai, a stretch of barely 300 kilometres, takes more than five hours. I am the sole "white" person not only in the "soft"-class carriage, but in the whole train. My interpreter's colleague will be waiting for me at the other end. On the journey itself I am looked after

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by the conductress who does not know a word of any foreign language, keeps on offering me tea, and obviously does not like the idea of me leaving her domain to look round the other carriages.

Years ago in Missouri I got on a St Louis bus in which there wasn't a single white man. There were hostile faces all around, or was I just imagining it? Nothing happened, but I sighed with relief when it was all over. In the train to Shanghai all conversations stop the moment I appear. The astonishment is great; the silence, however, not in the least bit strange.

A young man who evidently wishes to practise his English speaks to me. He wants to know where I come from. He does not know the word "Germany." Communication is impossible. Finally I hit on a name he understands: "Berlin"; and then I wandered on through the long train.

IN SHANGHAI, as one can see at a glance, the standard of living is higher than in Peking or Nanking. The people dress better and more colourfully; the range of goods on offer in the shops and stores is considerably wider. Crowds throng round a number of shop-windows on one of the main streets—here the miracles of modern technology are on display: colour TV, stereo-systems, the latest electrical gadgetry. One can look at all this, but who can buy it?

Here, more often than in Peking or Nanking, one also sees those enormous hoardings on which till recently the slogans of the Party were to be read. Now they seem to carry only advertisements, to some mysterious purpose. Because not only toys and toothpaste are offered on the billboards here, but also Coca-Cola, Johnny Walker whisky, and American cigarettes . . . which can only be purchased with dollars in China, and the Chinese are not allowed to possess dollars. On other boards, large Japanese vans are advertised; but there are no private vehicles. What is it all in aid of?

Somewhat embarrassed, people explain to me that these advertisements make the town "more colourful", and besides, the space-rates bring in foreign currency. (Others tell me that advertising has contributed greatly to the rapidly rising crime-rate in Shanghai.) Still, many here think it is possible that Western commodities that one only sees in shop-windows and on hoardings at the moment will be "generally available" in the "not too distant future." Will they also be reasonably priced? No one is prepared to say. But one man tells me about his "unforgettable" visit to Germany. He was "deeply impressed"—but not by Heidelberg or Rothenburg, not by the Cologne cathedral or the Hamburg harbour, not by the Alps or the North Sea. Frankfurt was the unforgettable experience for him—he went to the *Kaufhof* department store there.

IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE what took place in China in the decade between 1966 and 1976. People talk freely about the "Cultural Revolution." But it was not a revolution, rather an epidemic of mass hysteria inspired and organised by the Communist Party. Still, the whole thing did have something "cultural" about it, inasmuch as it was a violent movement directed against culture. Intellectuals and artists were denounced as "enemies of the people." Knowledge and education were considered "reactionary." Anyone who had achieved anything was punished and humiliated. Students were allowed to beat up their professors and to force them to clean out the lavatories. Workers mutinied against their engineers. The illiterate rose up against the educated. Women's heads were shorn, musicians had their fingers broken (they had played Mozart and Beethoven). All over the country innocent people were tortured: there were even reported crucifixions.

They tell me all this belongs to the past, and the victims have forgiven the perpetrators long ago. Is this true? We Europeans have had some experience of this kind of thing. Of course, people who have been humiliated can forgive; but can they forget? And a man who has tortured may be able to forget his misdeeds and suppress the memory, but if he meets his victims, will he be able to forgive them . . . for having deprived him of the right to torture again?

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"CULTURAL REVOLUTION"—that is now synonymous with the historic disgrace of the Chinese Communist Party. But it is rather difficult to talk about it too openly, I am told, because in the main, the same functionaries who are still sitting on the Central Committee were sitting there during that terrible decade. My questions, European friends warn me, will not get me very far.

In Peking I am told that "the Gang of Four" were to blame for everything. And who then was to blame for the fact that the Gang of Four were allowed to do as they pleased? I am given evasive answers. "Mao Tse-tung was already old and ill. . . ." In Nanking too the talk is mainly of the Gang of Four whose malefic powers were apparently limitless. I know that a number of those I talked to were maltreated in the most savage fashion in those days. No wonder they had no desire to chat with a foreigner about the past.

It is different in Shanghai, always China's most restless and unruly city. Long ago the Chinese Communist Party was founded here by Mao Tse-tung, and here voices of protest against the Cultural Revolution were first raised; here, it soon becomes apparent, they have different ideas, clearer, more candid, more aggressive.

THE WRITERS' GUILD in Shanghai gives a dinner in honour of their guest, and I have already experienced evenings like this in Peking and Nanking. They were brief and boring: official speeches abounding in well-meaning phrases and then tiresome conversation through an interpreter. More of the same here. Six writers sit at the table. Five of them speak no foreign languages, the sixth has actually translated a German classic (Fontane's *Effi Briest*), but refuses to speak a word of a language he is supposed to know. All of them are over fifty. We talk about peace, friendship and cooperation.

After yet another hour my patience is quite exhausted. Perhaps we could move on to some other questions? "Yes", says the man who is leading the discussion, "There are no taboos here!" He looks like an old porter, his appearance neglected, with rough manners but not unfriendly. He is the author Wu Chang, an old Communist of "the Long March" (and he has described his experiences of those early days in his best-known work, the novel *The Red Sun* which has also been made into a film). He is Vice-President of the Shanghai Writers' Guild.

I ask them who actually bears the responsibility for the Cultural Revolution. Wu Chang thumps his fist on the table and says "Mao!" His colleagues nod. Terse but unequivocal explanations follow which reveal the old guerrilla rather than the man of letters. Mao did great service, but only in the time before the liberation. He was quite unable to govern this country. He made many mistakes and he misunderstood the situation. The Cultural Revolution could only be compared to the darkest Middle Ages (except that it was "much worse").

"Those of us sitting here at this table could not practise our profession at that time. We were beaten up and maltreated. We were imprisoned for years. . . ."

They all nod to confirm this.

"Do you think such terrible events could be repeated?"

Wu Chang answers: "No, a nation can only be duped once. . . ."

ALL OVER CHINA, especially at railway stations and in airport waiting-rooms, I caught sight of a gigantic oil painting: Mao Tse-tung sitting casually, genially, in a soft armchair. He is wearing comfortable house-shoes and a friendly smile, his hand resting on the right hand of Comrade Hua Kuo-feng who is bending forward slightly. He had evidently just given Hua a piece of paper on which the words are legible: "When you have matters in your hands, then my heart will be light." For the moment, evidently, Chairman Hua wishes to be regarded as Mao's chosen and blessed successor. How long will it be before it turns out to be in his best interests to have these ubiquitous pictures removed?

ON THE RETURN FLIGHT I chat with a West German engineer in China for the second time, negotiating with the Chinese about building a large industrial plant. He tries to set me right.

"What do you actually expect? I'm afraid you read too many books on Sinology before you flew to Peking. Sinologists love China—and you should never trust the judgment of lovers. Their vision is always clouded. . . . Let's be frank: China today is a primitive, backward country. You can put it in a more refined way: an 'underdeveloped' country. A large part of the intelligentsia left China when the Communists gained control. And during the Cultural Revolution the remaining intelligentsia were decimated. Can you wonder that things are as they are? I've conducted negotiations in various African and Asian countries. I prefer talking to the Chinese. They make things difficult for us, but they know what they want. Their arguments are not unreasonable. . . . Should that give us cause to be optimistic? That depends on whether you believe in reason, and the victory of reasonableness, or not—in China or anywhere else. . . ."

Our plane is approaching Athens. In the darkness I make out the outlines of the Acropolis. I begin to feel a little more at home.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

The Etruscans

Where the "Mystery" Stands—By MICHAEL GRANT

ETRUSCAN STUDIES move with enormous speed. There are very many new excavations all the time, and new interpretations that go with them.[1] These studies often make their appearance in journals, mostly Italian, to which British and American libraries sometimes do not subscribe.[2] Besides, articles are encapsulated in Congress proceedings, as well as in other works of joint authorship,[3] including *Festschriften* which are not always easy to come by.[4] There have also been important recent books on this or that aspect of Etruscan life—far too numerous to cite here—and many volumes of a more general character, including more than a dozen published or revised during the past seven years alone.[5] This seems a lot; but the significant fact is that so much continually emerges.

In the first place, the Etruscans, the ancient inhabitants of what are now Toscana and the northern part of Lazio, are taking shape, no longer in isolation, but as part of the Mediterranean civilisation that surrounded them. Secondly, they now appear not as a single amorphous mass (or as a homogeneous, close-knit, active "League", because the "League" that existed never achieved united political action or effectiveness), but as a group of remarkably distinctive city-states, as different from one another as, say, Greek cities like Athens and Sparta. *That* difference causes us no surprise: why, then, should we instead be so readily content to group all the Etruscans together as one wholly undifferentiated unit? (The briefest tour round Tuscan and Roman museums suggests their local divergences.)[6]

Thirdly, we have become better equipped to appreciate the extensive roles played by some of these city-states outside Etruria itself, in north and south Italy, and farther afield. Fourthly, it is becoming possible to recognise what startlingly large differences can be seen between the contours of the Tyrrhenian coast-line in antiquity and those of today.

These developments are not always as clear as they might be because modern writers on Etruscan subjects have not been all that considerate to readers unacquainted with specialist technicalities and topographical details. But, in general terms, what does, in my opinion, appear to emerge is that the commonly used term "Greco-Roman civilisation" ought to be modified and enlarged to read "Greco-Etrusco-Roman civilisation" instead. In spite of their lack of what may properly be called a literature, the Etruscans seem to be as important as that. A less appreciative view would be to regard them as merely one of several "fringe" semi-Greek cultures (such as those in Scythia, Syria, Spain, etc.). Yet early Roman civilisation, too, could be described as a "fringe" Greek (or Etruscan!) culture, and is none the less important for being so. I am sure that one of the reasons why the Etruscans are not awarded quite the prominence they deserve is because we feel frustrated owing to our ignorance of the structure of their language. This is a sensitive point to discuss with Etruscan

[1] As was stressed in *History Today*, Vol. 30, February 1980, p. 55, in a review of M. Cristofani, *The Etruscans: A New Investigation* (1979).

[2] E.g. *Studi Etruschi, La Parola del Passato, Dialoghi di Archeologia, Prospettiva.*

[3] E.g. D. and F. R. Ridgway (ed.), *Italy Before the Romans* (1979).

[4] The *Festschriften* in honour of L. Banti (1965), A. Neppi Modona (1975), and J. Heurgon (1976) particularly require attention.

[5] They include, at various levels, L. Banti, *The Etruscan Cities and their Culture* (London, 1973, from *Il mondo degli Etruschi*, 1968); F. Gröteke, *Etruskerland; Geschichte, Kunst, Kultur* (1973); F. Boitani, M. Cataldi, M. Pasquinucci and M. Torelli, *Etruscan Cities* (London 1975, from *Le città etrusche*, 1973); also *Die Städte der Etrusker* (2nd ed., 1977); M. Pallottino, *The Etruscans* (ed. by D. Ridgway, 1974; also *Etruscologia*, 6th ed., 1977); H. Stutzer, *Die Etrusker und ihre Welt* (1975); A. Hus, *Les siécles d'or de l'histoire étrusque* (1976); R. M. Ogilvie, *Early Rome and the Etruscans* (1976); O. J. Brendel, *Etruscan Art* (ed. E. H. Richardson, 1978); M. Cristofani, *L'arte degli Etruschi: produzione e consumo* (Turin, 1978), and *Gli Etruschi* (1978), the work mentioned in note 1; M. Sprenger and G. Bartolini, *Die Etrusker: Kunst und Geschichte* (1978); E. Gatti, *Gli Etruschi* (1979); K.-W. Weber, *Geschichte der Etrusker* (1979); M. Grant, *The Etruscans* (1980).

[6] The point was emphasised in "A View of the Etruscans", *Proceedings of the Classical Association* (LXXV, 1978, pp. 9-22).

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experts who are inclined to remind one, perhaps occasionally with a hint of impatience, how many of its *words* we do understand.

For since the Etruscan letters were adapted from a Greek alphabet (apparently learnt from Cumae in Campania), it is at least possible to *read* the language without any difficulty. It appears to have abounded in hisses and clicks. An Etruscan literature there is not—although voluminous religious texts at one time existed—but inscriptions survive (the two longest comprising 1,190 and 300 words); and we can detect, more or less, what they are about. Often they are ritual texts or epitaphs, whose repetitious formulas give us the help we need. Thus, it comes to be possible to see that *sech* means daughter and *clan* means son, and to detect genitives of the patronymic and matronymic. By such means (and others) it is possible to draw up a little dictionary of the words that can be understood. But "little" is what it is—only about ten pages long!

The trouble is that, even in the most promising inscriptions, and even after a wide variety of linguistic methods have been deployed to decipher them, words that mean nothing to us continue to crop up, in large numbers. Worse still, we cannot identify the structure of the language. Exciting views that it is like Irish or Finnish or Albanian or Basque turn out to be unimpressive, and initial hopes that bilingual inscriptions (Etruscan and Punic, the Semitic language of Phoenician Carthage) found at Cerveteri's port Santa Marinella would enable us to "crack" Etruscan have proved equally baseless. The happy accident of the Rosetta stone in the British Museum, which provided the key to Egyptian hieroglyphics, has not been repeated. All that can be said is that the Etruscan language does not seem to be Indo-European. This seems to us strange when we look at it through the eyes of the Etruscans' Indo-European-speaking Roman neighbours, as we inevitably tend to do. Yet there were other non-Indo-European languages in Italy too, covering, when Etruscan is included, as much as half of the country (Ligurian, Raetian; also the island tongues of Sardinia and Western Sicily). Perhaps this is small consolation since we do not understand any of them, but at least it ought to stop us from behaving like the Romans and just thinking how odd and nasty the Etruscans were because they spoke such an alien tongue.

THE ORIGINS OF THE Etruscan language are still shrouded in doubt: one would almost use the word "mystery", except that the term has been somewhat overworked. But the classic, notorious, alleged "mystery" is, of course, the origins of the Etruscans themselves. Yet here a point made by Professor Massimo Pallottino and many of his followers requires attention. When we are studying the great ages of the French and English and Italian peoples of more recent ages, they object, we do not spend the whole time asking where they come from: we consider instead the process of their *formation* in the countries which assumed and still bear their names.

All the same, it is no use pretending that we can stop ourselves from speculating about the beginnings of the Etruscans because we shall do no such thing. And, since that is so, then we could, I suggest, make a good start by dismissing altogether, once and for all, the theory of their Anatolian (Lydian) origin (quoted, from the Lydians, without explicit concurrence, by Herodotus—and merely based on a demonstrable group of false etymologies). We then become free to think instead in terms of a gradual, highly complicated and involved series of smallish movements from various places and various directions, over a considerable, disturbed period of time (a series of movements of which a few random traces can still be detected). Perhaps a greatly prolonged version of what is now happening in South-east Asia may serve as a partial, remote analogy—or the long-drawn-out, piecemeal supplementation of the ancient population of England by little gangs of Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisians, Irish and others. Nearly all of them, or an extremely large proportion of them, ended up by talking much the same language. And so sometimes do people who come from even more diverse sources still. Look at the Americans, who came from many countries over a large period of time and mostly speak English. So the fact that the various peoples who came to make up the Etruscans ended up by speaking the single language of Etruscan is no objection to the view that they, too, were of varied origins.

PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT period in all Etruscan history was the 8th century BC or thereabouts, when groups of adjacent villages, each group on its own defensible plateau, became amalgamated with one another to constitute larger entities which before long became recognisable as their cities and city-states (as also happened in Greece). The Etruscans amalgamated into this more efficient type of regional and local structure because of the marvellously abundant supplies of metal, especially copper and iron, in their vicinity—and the immense and pressing and lucrative demand for these commodities from the Greeks, certain of whose city-states (from the island of Euboea, prominent at this time) were establishing their first Italian trading posts further south upon Campanian soil, on the island of Ischia (Pithecusae) and at Cuma (Cumae) on the mainland opposite. These Greeks were in close touch with that other Mediterranean sea-faring

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power, that of the Phoenicians, and with Phoenician settlements in the west; of which Carthage was the first and greatest, but others were closer at hand (for example in Sardinia and Sicily). That is why Greek and Near-Eastern elements alike flooded into the flowering architecture and art, including lavish goldwork of oriental style, of the suddenly, enormously enriched Etruscans. Cumae also gave the Etruscan cities their alphabet—which they then adapted to the needs of their own language—and gave them also the names of some of their gods (and may have taught them the cultivation of the vine and the olive).

Subsequently the traders and then colonists of the Euboeans in Italy were superseded as providers of the principal Greek influences on Etruria, by the Corinthians and others and then by the city-states of Ionia, across the Aegean. And yet, all the same, the view of Etruria as a "fringe" of Greece, to which I referred earlier, can only be adopted with certain important reservations. For the art and life-style of the Etruscan states, despite all their borrowings from Greece, still remains resolutely non-Greek in a variety of ways—partly because of the additional, un-Greek, Near-Eastern ingredient, but partly also because the Etruscans (whatever their internal differences) clearly had very non-Greek temperaments indeed: for example, they had a distinctly un-Hellenic, anti-classical love of the asymmetrical, exaggerated, inharmonious, bizarre.

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ALTHOUGH THE NUMBER OF Etruscan or Etruscanised communities known to us increases almost daily, and now amounts to hundreds, the traditional number of their city-states was twelve. It is not always easy to identify and list these twelve for any given time. But it helps us to reduce the picture to some sort of order if we reflect that the number of them which played a really significant part in the process of historical development was not even twelve, but notably less.

The earliest of these places to become a unified, highly prosperous centre—profiting from the foreign demand for its metals—was Tarquinia. As at most Etruscan centres, we regrettably have to depend far too much on the Tarquinians' cemeteries for our knowledge of their way of life. But what makes *their* cemeteries peculiarly noteworthy is the unique series of painted tombs which appear from the middle of the 6th century onwards (considerably after the apogee of their city). These paintings reflect, with the usual native Etruscan twist, successive Greek influences on Etruscan art—though Greece itself had nothing to compare with them. The Tarquinians were also, like other Etruscan states, the masters of large settlements and towns in various sections of their territory. They also possessed three ports (of which Porto Clementino, the ancient Graviscae, was the most significant), from which they operated a fleet that gave a start to the famous sea-power of the Etruscans.

Tarquinia's virtually unchallenged primacy, however, was limited, approximately, to parts of the 8th and 7th centuries BC. Thereafter the control of the metals of Mount Tolfa, the source of the Tarquinian rise to power, passed in large degree to Cerveteri (Caere), urbanised very shortly after its neighbour. Cerveteri displays huge mound-tombs with magnificent contents, including splendid imported or native jewellery, and pottery made by Greek immigrants and their local pupils—as well as the distinctive, native, black *bucchero*. Cerveteri also replaced Tarquinia as the major Etruscan sea-power, allying itself with Carthage in the 6th century BC, in order to stop the encroachments of Phocaea, a maritime city-state of Ionian Greece, and its colonists at Marseille (Massalia) and Aleria in Corsica (Alalia). Cerveteri's own Tyrrhenian coastline has revealed an almost continuous series of ports, which have yielded vital information about its Carthaginian contacts.

When Cerveteri had encroached on the territory of Tarquinia from the south, Vulci did the same from the north. That city, now almost alarmingly deserted, overlooked the valley of the river Fiora, which (in keeping with the extraordinary importance of Etruscan rivers as water- and land-routes) provided communications with the metals of Mount Amiata—the principal source of Vulci's wealth, though the place owed a good deal to agricultural development as well. Thus enriched, Vulci not only made stone sculpture (a rarity in Eturia, where scarcity of the material made terracotta statuary more frequent), but also displays a unique, astonishing influx and imitation of Greek vases over a considerable period. And local craftsmen also utilised Amiata metals to create the most flourishing bronze-working industry in the whole of Etruria. On their coastline, the Vulcentines controlled a market or trading-station at Orbetello, beside an admirably protected lagoon which is now wholly enclosed, owing to silting, but at that time had openings on both sides to the sea. Orbetello was not a port of Vulci in the close, *primary* sense in which, for example, Graviscae was the port of Tarquinia or Piraeus was, and is, the port of Athens (and Vulci had a port in this sense as well). But Orbetello was Vulci's port in a *secondary* sense (important in Etruria and Greece alike) in that it stood at a more distant point of Vulcentine territory.

To the north-west of Vulci was Vetulonia, which became a city and grew rich because of its close proximity to the metals of the Massetano. It developed a style of tombs and (once again) stone sculpture of its own, and apparently its own form of jewellery as well. Vetulonia possessed close links with Sardinia, directed from a primary port on Lake Prilius, which has now completely disappeared but in ancient times was an extensive stretch of water which (like the Orbetello lagoon) had an entrance to the sea. On the other side of the lake was another port (or ports) belonging to another, later developing, city-state—Roselle (Rusellae), where excavations have provided unusual insight into the design and housing of an Etruscan town. It is possible that Rusellae, at least temporarily, more or less eliminated Vetulonia; but this is the sort of political history which our scrappy Greek and Latin literary sources have failed to hand down to us. On Vetulonia's north-western flank stood Populonia, at that time a peninsula and virtually an island—the only *major* Etruscan centre to be directly situated on the sea. Populonia owed its position and prosperity to its sea-link with Sardinia (reflected in the architecture

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of very early Populonian tombs) and, above all to the adjacent metals of the Campigliese and the island of Elba. Nevertheless, it was for a long time not a city-state on its own account but probably a dependency of Vetulonia.

VOLTERRA (Volaterrae), north-west of Populonia, stood on a lofty hill overlooking the River Cecina. The river valley was rich in metals, which the Volterrans, it now seems, exploited from an ancient date: though an enormous landslide (the Balze) has made it difficult to generalise about the early history of the site. Unlike southern Etruscans, the people of this region long continued to burn and not bury their dead (later on, they became famous for their alabaster cremation urns). Although Volterra probably had a port, near the mouth of the river, it also looked inland more than most Etruscan cities, extending its sphere of influence up the valleys of the Arno's tributaries, the Era and Elsa.

Inland at Chiusi (Clusium), in about 700 BC, Etruscan-speaking persons destroyed or absorbed the villages of an Italic-speaking people, the Umbrians, and created a town in their place. More than many Etruscan city-states, Chiusi depended for its prosperity somewhat less on metals than on agriculture, in which the valley of the important, navigable Tiber tributary, the Chiana (Clanis)—now vanished—was extraordinarily productive. Nevertheless, Chiusi also derived metals from Mount Cetona, and apparently acquired part of metal-bearing Mount Amiata from Vulci. The Chiusine people, like the Volterrans, long continued to burn their dead, producing terracotta cremation jars of a highly individual type ("canopi") surmounted by sculptured human heads. Chiusi also produced its own ("thick-walled") type of *bucchero* pottery. A massive adjacent hill, the Poggio Gaiella, is honeycombed with tombs. Arezzo (Arretium), Cortona, Perugia (Perusia), and Orvieto (now firmly identified with Volsinii, the religious centre of the politically ineffective Etruscan League), all seem to have been Chiusine foundations before becoming independent city-states, a status they perhaps did not attain until after 500 BC. Of Chiusine origin too, apparently, was Murlo (Poggio Civitate), where recent finds include important 6th-century buildings and statuary, opening up new historical and cultural vistas. It is clear, therefore, that Chiusi possessed very extensive territory, particularly, it would seem, under its great monarch Lars Porsenna, whose huge tomb, described in fantastic terms by ancient writers, has not yet been located.

In the south-eastern corner of Etruria rose the hill of Veio (Veii), where a group of villages, as so often, joined up to form a city. A somewhat late starter, Veii became the greatest of the Etruscan city-states in the 6th and 5th centuries BC. Not possessing metals, it owed an exceptional proportion of its wealth to agriculture (including the skilful irrigation for which the Etruscans were famed), but also possessed a unique source of riches in its salt-pans at the mouth of the Tiber. But its proximity to Rome just across the Tiber—which likewise coveted the salt—was intolerably close and competitive, and, although relations remained good for a long time, finally, after several bouts of hostilities, the Veientines succumbed to Rome in c. 396 BC. They had been left almost unaided by their fellow-Etruscans, with a selfish unwisdom which powerfully underlines the separateness of their various city-states one from another (and remains not wholly irrelevant to the problems of the modern world).

THIS INTRODUCTION OF Rome into the story brings us to the wider question of the relations of the Etruscan city-states with other parts of Italy outside Etruria proper, to the south and the north.

Considering the south first of all, we have to look far beyond Rome, right down into Campania, where the nucleus of the Etruscan extension and influence was Capua (now Santa Maria Capua Vetere), situated on an important north-south route at a crossing of the River Volturno. Excavations of the last few years have confirmed that from before 800 BC onwards, there was uninterrupted development of the site. Gradually Etruscanised, Capua achieved outstanding commercial and industrial significance, gaining special fame for its bronzework. Etruscan objects are also found at other places in the region, including Pompeii. But finds have now also revealed the noteworthy fact that an additional major focus of Etruscan activity existed further to the south-east, near the Gulf of Salerno (Pontecagnano, Fratte di Salerno, etc.).

This formation of Etruscan Campania is comparable to, and indeed almost seems an integral part of, the same process as the formation of the communities of Etruscan Etruria. The Campanian process, it is true, must have been secondary and derivative in the sense that it involved the arrival of some Etruscans from the homeland, either as marauders or traders or immigrants, or all three. But it is clear that there was no federal colonisation by the Etruscans *as a whole*, which their "league" would have not been competent to undertake. Instead, various Etruscan city-states (or individuals or groups from one or the other of them) struck out—on their own account making contact with Campania by land or by sea or both, according to locality and period. Identifiable, by archaeological means, among these Etruscan cities which took the

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lead in Campania are Vulci and Orvieto (Volsinii), the latter presumably acting on behalf of its overlord, Chiusi.

Expansion into Campania had required the Etruscan city-states to maintain an active presence in Latium, that part of the modern Lazio which lay south of the Tiber, between Etruria and Campania. And indeed a very considerable number of Latian sites, including now Castel di Decima (Politorium) and a place near Malafede (Ficana), show material remains which are absolutely identical with the artifacts of Etruria. Outstandingly notable in this respect is Palestrina (Praeneste), where an initial burst of wealth already before 700 BC (at the same time as the great enrichment of Etruria proper) was followed by tombs of the next century containing contents actually indistinguishable from those of Etruria. In particular, these objects are astonishingly similar to finds at Cerveteri, and it is Cerveteri which, profiting by its geographical position, seems to have been closest to Palestrina, culturally and commercially, and perhaps exercising some political control as well, though this is always hard to say.

THE BRIDGE, LITERALLY, BETWEEN Etruria and Latium, was provided by Rome: and for some years of the 7th century BC, and almost the whole of the 6th, it came under the rule of people from certain Etruscan city-states. Tarquinius Priscus, who ruled as king at Rome between dates traditionally ascribed to 616 and 579 BC, seems to have come from Tarquinia (not Cerveteri as some believe), where his father had arrived from Corinth, with artisans and artists, as a political refugee. Priscus then moved on to Rome which he governed, apparently, as an independent state, and not as a satellite of Tarquinia. His son or grandson Tarquinius "the Proud" (*Superbus*) was enshrined in Roman story and legend as the ruler whose fall inaugurated Rome's glorious Republic (c. 507 BC). Whether the Roman monarchs of this dynasty from Tarquinia were really only two in number, and not more, we cannot say. But a painting from the François Tomb at Vulci (now at Rome's Torlonia Museum), depicting a whole unfamiliar range of Etruscan mythology, shows the death of a certain Cneve Tarchunies Rumach (Cnaeus Tarquinius Romanus) at the hands of a warrior from Vulci. Cneve might be another, third Roman monarch of the house of the Tarquins, hitherto unknown; or he might be a Tarquin who never came to the throne.

The same paintings depict three further heroes of Vulci: Caeles (Caelius) Vibenna, his brother Aulus Vibenna, and Mastarna. All three are variously described by ancient literary traditions as having emigrated from Vulci and settled with their followers at Rome—and at least one of them may have reigned over it for a time. Not long afterwards, Rome had a ruler from Chiusi as well. For it emerges from the literary tradition, relating to the years after the fall of Tarquinius Superbus, that the chauvinistic Roman stories proclaiming the rebuff of Lars Porsenna before the city—stories perpetuated, for our own edification, in Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*—were untrue. On the contrary he occupied Rome for a time, and ruled over it.

So Rome, in the course of receiving these influences from Tarquinia, Vulci and Clusium, underwent a considerable amount of "Etruscanisation." But the process was not total. For the Romans continued to speak their own Italic (Latin) tongue, which survived as their only language after the Etruscans had gone. (The neighbouring territory of the Faliscans centred on Cività Castellana, the ancient Falerii Veteres, was another, comparable, Italic-speaking region under strong Etruscan influence, exercised in this case by Veii.)

IN NORTHERN ITALY TOO, later known to the Romans as "Gaul this side of the Alps" (Cisalpine Gaul) there was once again an extensive Etruscan presence, so extensive indeed that, as in the south, it ran in many ways parallel to the evolution of the city-states of Etruria itself and could almost be regarded as part of the same process. The nucleus of this northern development was Bologna (the Etruscan Felsina and Roman Bononia), which prospered owing to its proximity to metals, and became urbanised and strongly Etruscanised not long after 700. Bologna

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dominated the Reno valley; and its dependencies, Casalecchio and, from late in the 6th century, Marzabotto as well, stood higher up in the same valley, controlling the route and Apennine passes that led south to Etruria. At Mantova (Mantua), too, Virgil described the Etruscans as the leading component of a very mixed community, and they dominated other centres in the region as well. Particularly interesting are Spina and Adria, two harbour towns on the east coast near the mouths of the Po. These places are seen from their finds to have comprised both Etruscan and Greek communities, collaborating in these markets to catch the Adriatic trade.

Moreover, although this is less well known, the Etruscans were very much in evidence on north Italy's west, Tyrrhenian, coast as well. Pisa (Pisae) is probably a case in point, for despite much controversy it seems to have been an Etruscan or Etruscanised port. This is hard to imagine today when the place is quite far from the sea: but it was on the sea then, or rather on one of the protected sea-lagoons—like those of Orbetello and Vetulonia—at the point where (in those days) the Arno and Serchio met before entering the sea. Moreover, a line of further harbour towns which either contained Etruscan maritime quarters or at least acted as transit centres for Etruscan imports extended northwards along the Tyrrhenian seashore, including Viareggio (the port of an Etruscan settlement at Massarosa) and Luni (Luna). By this coastal route Etruscan objects travelled onwards to further ports of southern France, from which they made their way—as recent finds have increasingly shown—into the interior of the country and onwards into central Europe.

SUCH WAS THE LINE of Etruscan commerce that reached northwards from the mouth of the Arno at Pisa. The middle reaches of the Arno also possessed two major Etruscan centres (Quinto Fiorentino and Artimino), precursors of one of their better known foundations at Fiesole (Faesulae). In most or all of these regions of expansion north of the Arno it seems that—as geographical considerations would suggest—Volterra played a principal part. At about the beginning of the 6th century BC, however, people from Chiusi appear to have largely superseded Volterra in these northern regions, employing their dependency, Arezzo, as a springboard (as they employed Orvieto in the south) and then moving up across the Arno to the Apennines and beyond. Although private initiatives can never be excluded, a considerable amount of the expansionist activities of Chiusi may have been organised by its outstanding leader, Lars Porsenna.

BETWEEN THE LAST YEARS of the 5th century BC and the third quarter of the 4th, the Etruscan city-states lost their power, and the peripheral sphere of their influence contracted, first in Latium and Campania and then in the north. In Latium, Rome and other cities gradually shelved their Etruscan rulers and connections; in Campania, first of all Greek Cumae and then Syracuse proved formidable adversaries, and then in c. 430-23, the Greeks and Etruscans of Campania were alike swept away by Italic-speaking Samnites from the mountains of the interior. On the other, northern, side of Etruria, the Etruscan centres had at first compensated for their compatriots' setbacks in Latium and Campania by managing to increase their own trade and prosperity. But by the middle of the 4th century northern Italy was in the hands of Celtic Gauls invading from central Europe. Meanwhile, in the Etruscan homeland itself, Veii had already fallen to Rome, and then it was only a matter of time before Roman control was extended over all other Etruscan centres throughout Etruria, Campania and the north Italian territories alike. The later history of Etruria under the Romans has its significant moments and aspects; but that is another tale altogether.

THE FOREGOING BRIEF SURVEY has concerned itself, instead, with the earlier three or four centuries during which the Etruscan city-states stood at the height of their power and prosperity. I hope it has given some reasons for my assertion, at the outset, that we ought to treat these people as not far from equal associates with the main partners in the civilisation of that age. And the point may become more self-evident as year succeeds to year. For one thing which is entirely certain is that the present rapid tempo of discoveries and reassessments is not going to slow down. Even by the time that these words are printed, it is a safe bet that new material and hypotheses will be available.

The next step, probably, will be to find that we have enough evidence to attempt a social history of Etruria; a number of scholars, such as Mauro Cristofani, are approaching that point already. In any case, as time goes on, we shall gradually become more successful in the difficult psychological task of assessing a group of peoples of major importance whose way of life, although owing much to the Greeks and contributing much to the Romans, remains notably, fascinatingly, different from either of those two civilisations—a fact which puzzled and annoyed the contemporary representatives of both of them.

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DISCUSSION

"The Syphilitic Shock"

Puritanism, Capitalism, & a Medical Factor

By STANISLAV ANDRESKI

EMILE DURKHEIM'S methodological rule that social phenomena must be explained in terms of other social phenomena was a useful corrective to the abuse of biological analogies in the sociology of his time. But as a rigidly applied limitation it is just as obscurantist as the superstition about "the mode of production" as the final and irreducible cause of everything else. In the light of knowledge available today we might find the views of Montesquieu and Adam Ferguson on the influence of climate too simplistic; but it would be absurd to deny that climate affects the culture. Recently the ecological movement has drawn our attention to the various ways in which pollution might put an end to progress. A well supported thesis (by Derek Bryce-Smith, Professor of Chemistry at Reading University) has been put forward that lead poisoning is an important factor in the causation of juvenile delinquency. Here, accepting Weber's thesis that the puritanical ingredients of Protestantism constituted an essential factor in the development of capitalism, I shall try to trace the causation further back and inquire into the effects of another factor which might have constituted an equally crucial link, and which is neither religious nor economic but medical.

In his recent pioneering masterpiece, *Plagues and Peoples* (1977),[1] the Chicago historian William McNeill has been able to explain a number of turning points of history which hitherto appeared as inexplicable. The Spaniards' extraordinary success in conquering central and southern America—and, even more, the unparalleled rapidity of the conversion of the Indians—lose their miraculous character in the light of what McNeill tells us about the impact of the diseases (above all, smallpox and measles) brought from Europe. I want to put forth the view that the importation of syphilis into Europe had equally profound effects on European civilisation: affecting most directly the religion and sexual morality, and indirectly the economic development.

In one of his essays D. H. Lawrence attributes the rise of puritanism to the arrival of syphilis in Europe. As might be expected from a novelist, he confines himself to a brief affirmation without backing it with more systematic arguments. I believe that Lawrence is right and that his contention can be supported on three grounds: chronological congruence; psychological plausibility; and the complete inadequacy of alternative explanations.

I MUST STRESS the limits of my thesis: I do not attribute the Reformation as a whole to the impact of syphilis. Throughout the Middle Ages there have been heresies and outbursts of opposition to the Church and especially the Papacy. The consolidation of the royal power, the emergence of educated lay officials and lawyers, the growth of the cities and the proliferation of wealthy merchants, all created stronger counterweights to the power of the Church, weakened by disorder and corruption at the centre and the licentiousness and greed of the clergy. The increasing burden of ecclesiastical exactions evoked hostility and resistance among the peasants and townsmen, while the nobility coveted the constantly growing wealth of the Church. The spread of literacy and the invention of printing undermined the priests' monopoly of access to the Holy Writ. The Nordic nations' resentment at being exploited by the Italians and the Spaniards, who controlled the Church, also played a part in the complex causation sketched above.

If a medical factor was involved, it was probably the plague which preceded the Reformation, and which might have undermined the people's trust in the power of the priests to protect them. It is difficult, however, to imagine a mental process which would link the abhorrence of pleasure with the plague which, true enough, was commonly regarded as God's punishment for sins in general, but was not believed to be caused by enjoyment of carnal pleasures, as was the case with syphilis.

My thesis purports to explain not *all* the aspects of Protestantism or even Puritanism in the more general sense, but only the injection into them of puritanism in the sense of abhorrence of pleasures

[1] William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (Blackwell).

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of the flesh—which includes comfort and repose, as well as the gratifications of bed and table. It is true, of course, that the ideals of asceticism drew a large number of practitioners throughout the Christian past, but these were hermits, monks, nuns and to a lesser extent priests. During the 16th and 17th centuries, however, a milder but more effective form of renunciation began to affect a much larger part of the Christian populations. This process cannot be explained by the fortuitous emergence of prophets of genius—although we must not disregard *a priori* the importance of accidental causes—because preachers of asceticism have always abounded. What demands explanation is why more people became inclined to follow such teachings.

ALL FORMS of Protestantism had a much stronger puritanical streak than can be found in Catholicism with the exception of the monastic orders. In the latter denomination, asceticism was mainly for the monks, while for the laity faith was regarded as more important than behaviour. The institution of confession permitted ever renewed reconciliation of recidivist sinning with staunch faith. At the price of diminishing people's ability to enjoy life, the Protestant churches succeeded in imposing more effectively on the majority of their faithful, as well as on the entirety of their clergy (naturally with a few exceptions), a stricter code of behaviour in financial dealings and the attitudes to work, and above all in all matters relating to sex. We must remember, however, that the Counter-Reformation also included a trend towards puritanism in the sense of the more rigorous enforcement of sexual morality. Never afterwards can we find brazenly licentious Popes (like the Borgias) or monasteries where open fornication was the rule.

It seems exceedingly likely that the spread of puritanism was mainly due to the arrival of syphilis in Europe. Causation of great historical processes is always bafflingly complex, and clearly many other factors were involved. But this seems to me less uncertain than any other explanation: puritanism would not have had the appeal which helped it to find adherents so quickly and widely without the spread of syphilis.

This thesis fits the chronology: syphilis appeared shortly after the discovery of America, presumably brought to Europe by the sailors of Columbus' *Santa Maria*, in 1492, *i.e.* seventeen years before the birth of Calvin. According to Howard W. Haggard, Dr Roderic Diaz is believed to have witnessed the landing of syphilis in Europe. He wrote a book on the subject dedicated to John III, King of Portugal, which is headed: *Treatise Entitled, Fruit of All Saints Against the Disease of the Island of Espanola . . . to the Common and General Good of those Suffering from the Disease in Question; Commonly Called Bubas. . . .* Diaz had treated syphilis in several of the sailors of Columbus; among these was the pilot, Pinzon, of Palos.

Gabriel Fallopius, the anatomist, after wandering all over Europe "in order to discover the hidden Secrets of Nature", a practice very common with the medieval physicians as it had been also with those of Greece, wrote in regard to the origin of syphilis:

> ". . . Amongst the Genoese was Christopher Columbus, a Man of remarkable Genius, who is called Colonus by Peter Martyr, a careful Writer concerning the Indies. . . . For this Columbus, Ferdinand and Isabella ordered a Frigate to be fitted out, and three Pinnances . . . with which he arrived at the West Indies. . . . There was found there, 'tis true, most precious Gold, and great Plenty of it was brought from thence, together with Aboundance of Pearls; but there was also a thorn joined to the Rose, and Aloes mixed with the Honey. For Columbus brought back his Vessels laden with the French Disease. There the disease is mild like the Itch amongst us, but transplanted hither it is become so fierce and unmerciful, as to infect and corrupt the Head, Eyes, Nose, Palate, Skin, Flesh, Bones, Ligaments, and at last the whole Bowels."[2]

The historian (Haggard) adds:

> "It appeared in France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland and Greece in 1496, in Scotland in 1497, and in Hungary and Russia in 1499. The spread of syphilis to the remaining parts of the known world was effected by the great voyagers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Vasco da Gama carried it on his ships to India in 1498, Europeans brought it to China in 1505, and by 1569 it had been smuggled into Japan. The Jews and Mohammedans, who were driven out of Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella after the conquest of Granada, carried the disease to Africa. There is no similar record of such a sudden establishment of any other disease throughout the world. Since the fifteenth century, this gift of the down-trodden natives of Espanola has been the constant companion of civilized man."

Some recent investigators reject the view that syphilis first evolved among the American Indians, and maintain that a mutation which made it virulent occurred somewhere around the Mediterranean. The exact bacteriological history matters little, as there is general agreement that the disease became virulent in the 15th century: its

[2] Howard W. Haggard, *Devils, Drugs and Doctors* (1959), pp. 249–251.

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impact on the European mind therefore must date from that time.

THE SOURCES amply convey the horror which it inspired. Its transmission through copulation was suspected from the beginning, and as it was in fact mostly contracted through unlawful intercourse, it could (more convincingly than any other disease) be regarded as a punishment for that sin. With a little bit of bad luck, one sinful act by either spouse could cause both of them to rot alive, become paralysed or mad, and their offspring be born diseased or dead. Until the 19th century the disease was absolutely incurable. A reliable and painless treatment became available only after the discovery of penicillin, which (together with the reliable methods of contraception) made possible the permissive society of today.

"The Europeans [Haggard says], faced with a new disease, were hard pressed for a name. Each country blamed some other and named the disease accordingly. The Spaniards called it the disease of Espanola; the Italians called it the French disease; the French called it the Italian disease; the English credited it to the French; the Russians named it the Polish disease; for the Turks it was the French disease; and for the Indians and Japanese the Portuguese disease."

It soon became so common that it appeared to Shakespeare as something inevitable. In *Henry IV*, Part 2, Falstaff says:

> "A man can no more separate age and covetousness than he can part young limbs and lechery. But the gout galls the one and the pox pinches the other.... A pox of this gout! Or a gout of this pox! For the one or the other plays the rogue with my great toe."

Unlike a number of other diseases, which struck more commonly the undernourished, badly-housed, and ill-clad, syphilis in no way spared the great, and was therefore particularly suited to be viewed as due to God's wrath. It would have been surprising, if seeing such dire consequences of sexual indulgence, people did not begin to view it with horror. Owing to the workings of the well known mental process of generalisation and extension, the abomination of sexual laxity tended to prompt condemnation not only of sexual indulgence within marriage, but also of all other kinds of pleasure or merriment. In other words, on general psychological grounds, the connection between the arrival of syphilis and the wave of asceticism appears very natural.

In an interesting article ("Civilisatie, Besmettingsangst en Hygiene" *Sociologisch Tijdschrift*, Dec. 1977) Johan Goudblom considers the question of whether the awareness and fear of contagion has contributed to the development of hygiene. The evidence confirms the accepted view that until towards the end of the 19th century people were totally ignorant about how diseases were transmitted. In view of this ignorance it seems plausible that (as he claims) the fear of disease contributed little to the progress of hygiene until the 19th century. None the less, his material shows beyond any doubt that people knew about contagion although they had wrong ideas of how it worked. Here is what Erasmus of Rotterdam makes one of his characters say in a dialogue in *Colloquia* (1523):

> "Nothing appears to me more dangerous as that so many people breathe the same warm air . . . there are many who suffer from hidden diseases, and there is no disease which is not contagious. Surely, many have the Spanish or (as it is often called) French pox, although it appears among all nations. These people present a threat which in my opinion is not smaller than that from the lepers. . . ."

The passage comes from Erasmus' colloquy on "Inns" (1523); six years later he devoted an entire colloquy to the dangers of venereal disease ("A Marriage in Name Only"); there are numerous other passages elsewhere (cf. in the preface of his *Lingue*, 1525) lamenting the ravages of syphilis. Fracastoro's popular Latin poem, *Syphilis* (1530), gave the most epidemic form of the pox (Spanish, Neapolitan, French) its name.

According to Craig Thompson, the editor of a recent edition of Erasmus' *Colloquies* (University of Chicago Press, 1965), the subject was widely treated by both medical and lay contemporaries. Ulrich von Hutten wrote about it (from first-hand experience) in *De morbo Gallico* (1519). Colet exhorted men to "call to remembrance the marvellous and horrible punishment of the abominable great pox, daily appearing to our sights. . . ." Fisher (in a 1509 sermon) paints a dark picture of men "vexed with the French pox, poor and needy, lying by the highways stinking and almost rotten above the ground, having intolerable ache in their bones." One of the charges against Cardinal Wolsey, as Tyndale noted, was that he "breathed... in the king's face when he [Wolsey] had the French pox."

Although Professor Thompson emphasises that "its sexual origin was not yet sufficiently understood", Erasmus often associated it with "intemperate sexuality", when "young men go whoring", and when women make themselves "a public sewer that every Tom, Dick, and Harry—the dirty, the vile, the diseased—resorts and empties his filth into . . ." ("The Young Man and the Harlot", 1523, p. 156). Contacts (from "kissing" to "common drinking cups") were to be avoided. And Erasmus' friend, Sir Thomas More, even offered a "Utopian" solution when he tells us

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that in Utopia an affianced pair are shown to each other naked to prevent ignorance or deception about the health of the future partner.

THE SCOTS seemed to have recognised the venereal character of the disease at an early date; in 1497 the town council of Aberdeen ordered that: "For protection from the disease which has come out of France and strange parts, all light women desist from their vice and sin of venery and work for their support, on pain, else, of being branded with a hot iron on their cheek and banished from the town."

In his edict of 1495 the Emperor Maximilian declared syphilis to be God's punishment for the sins of men. This remained the general view throughout the Christian world until recent times, and was shared, for example, by a physician at the court of Louis XV who wrote:

> "That the Venereal Disease was sent into the World by the Disposition of Providence, either to restrain, as with a Bridle, the unruly Passions of a sensual Appetite, or as a Scourge to correct the Gratification of them, is an Opinion highly probable. . . . But we must not conclude from hence, that this Disease in the Form it now appears, has been therefore known to Ancients, because the Lewdness of Mankind has always stood in need of a present Correction . . . let us enquire, not what God should have done, but what he has done; not whether he ought at all Times to have inflicted the Venereal Disease as a Punishment for the Lewdness of Mankind; but whether he has in reality so punished him or not." [3]

It is equally possible that the advent of the early Christian asceticism—and the victory of Christianity over the sexually more permissive religions of Antiquity—might have been connected with an increase in the virulence of gonorrhoea, which might have been caused by an increase in mobility and urbanisation produced by the unification of the Mediterranean world by the Romans. However, let us leave this hypothesis for the attention of the specialists able to examine the primary sources and to ascertain whether in this case there has been a chronological coincidence of the kind that undoubtedly occurred between syphilis and puritanism in early modern Europe.

THE ABOLITION OF the celibacy of the clergy can also be regarded as a move towards greater puritanism ("greater" in the sense of the more effective and sustained as opposed to more flamboyant but commonly contravened) because it brought the commandments of religion within the bounds of practicability. Although most people find strict marital fidelity difficult enough, there had been times and societies where many—perhaps a considerable majority—did maintain it; and, provided the age of marriage was not very high, also observed pre-marital chastity. In contrast only a few exceptional individuals can observe life-long chastity. Consequently, despite being designed to exclude temptation, even monasteries and nunneries often had the reputation (probably at least partially deserved) of being hotbeds of secret fornication and buggery, while infringements of celibacy have always been common among the lay clergy. Faced with impossibly high demands, the Catholic clergy have never been able to abide so steadfastly by the rules of their calling as did their Protestant equivalents who, even in the most puritanical denominations, had a much easier task, as they were allowed to marry.

Until the general weakening of the influence of religion which has occurred during the present century, consistent observance of the acknowledged rules of sexual morality was more common among the Protestants than among the Catholics who could obtain absolution through confession, while the former (with the partial exception of the Church of England) had no such escape from guilt and damnation. Another broad

[3] Quoted in Haggard, *Devils, Drugs and Doctors*, p. 160.

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difference between the two religions lies in the unequal weight assigned to the sins of men and women, in which respect the Protestants approached equality more closely, whereas the Catholics (with the exception of the Irish) have treated men's sexual misdemeanours much less seriously. This contrast may, however, stem from other circumstances (including pre-Christian traditions), since most Catholics live in countries stamped by the Mediterranean culture whereas most Protestants are Nordics, among whom women had a higher status even in prehistoric times. It may be, therefore, that on this point it was the religion that was moulded by the regional traditions rather than the other way round; or, as so often happens, the influence was reciprocal. However this may have been, the diminution of the concessions made to men can be interpreted as an adaptation to the epidemic of syphilis.

The increased strictness of the Catholic Church during the Counter-Reformation is usually explained as a reaction to the danger of disintegration and a result of the wars of religion. That greater intolerance of dissent might thus have been evoked seems highly likely, but the link between this and the tightening up of sexual morality seems tenuous. It seems more likely that the Catholic Church was affected by the factor, operating throughout Europe, which was also steering the development of the Protestant ethics in the direction of sexual puritanism. Anyway, there is no need to insist on monocausality and regard these explanations as mutually exclusive, as the impact of syphilis could have been reinforced by the effects of the struggle.

MY THESIS linking the rise of Puritanism (as well as the diffusion of puritanism) with the spread of syphilis finds further support from the absence of convincing alternative explanations. There is no reason to assume that the clusters of beliefs and commandments which crystallised as the doctrines of the denominations known to history were predetermined; and that no other combinations could have succeeded in establishing themselves, if some of the circumstances had been different. In comparison with the policy of the medieval Church, Calvin widened economic freedom while narrowing sexual freedom—not so much by introducing new restrictions as by a much stricter enforcement of the old prohibitions of fornication and adultery. Now, no compensating mechanism has been discovered whereby the lifting of the ban on usury and large profits would entail a greater severity towards the sins of the flesh, or the other way round. The existing explanations of this cluster of tenets invoke the notions and idiosyncrasies of the founder, which leaves it unexplained why the "package" offered by him was absorbed by large multitudes while the packages offered by other prophets fell on deaf ears. As a matter of fact, the first wave of the Reformation (inaugurated by Martin Luther) seems to have been accompanied by a relaxation of sexual restrictions which reached its most extreme form in the marital communism of Thomas Müntzer. The trend towards puritanism was led by John Calvin, but it seems implausible to attribute it entirely to his powers of persuasion.

In his *Peasant War in Germany* Friedrich Engels explains Calvinism as the religion of the merchant based on idolisation of parsimony. This interpretation of Calvinism as an adaptation to the needs of developing capitalism seems plausible in so far as it concerns the tenets which affect the conduct of business. The prohibition of lending on interest, the condemnation of high profits and accumulation of capital, the ethical regulation of conditions of employment and the obligations of charity and heavy donations to the Church did impede the development of capitalism; and their removal must have facilitated this process. Furthermore, it seems likely that businessmen would be inclined to support a doctrine which not only freed them from irksome restrictions but also bestowed a blessing on occupational inclinations which the medieval Church damned as sinful greed.

In contrast, there is no evidence that mercantile activity as such fosters an abhorrence of carnal pleasures. In Tokugawa Japan and Sung China the merchants were criticised by scholars for their inclination to sybaritism (the word comes, significantly, from the name of a commercial city in ancient Greece). The Italian merchants—Europe's first capitalists—were not known to be averse to the pleasures of bed or table. In most times and places the extent of hedonism depended on the means, while the "inner-wordly asceticism" in the midst of wealth appears as something extraordinary in the light of comparative history. From the psychological viewpoint, therefore, the link between commerce and asceticism appears extraneous or accidental—that is, produced by circumstances external to both. The causation normally works in the opposite direction: frugality helps in making money which (at least in the following generations) prompts self-indulgence, which in turn puts an end to the acquisition of wealth—at least through productive work. In contrast, the mental processes through which an epidemic of syphilis might have elicited puritanism and inner-worldly asceticism appear as psychologically understandable and, indeed, "natural."

We must not, however, push this thesis to the point of one-sidedness. It seems unlikely that the linking of the abhorrence of pleasure with the dedication to work would have occurred without other circumstances which distinguished North-

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Western Europe (and later, to an even greater extent, New England) from the rest of the world: such as the fairly ample opportunities to reap the fruits of one's labour, connected with the considerable freedoms and status of the merchants, craftsmen, and to a lesser extent even peasants. In different times and other places the puritan inclinations led more often to unproductive self-mortification than to enterprise or to invention. The Russian "Skoptzy", for example, found an outlet for their puritanism in the custom of undergoing castration.

MAX WEBER was right in thinking that the greatest originality of the puritanical variants of Protestantism was the "inner-worldly asceticism" which prompted unremitting work and abstemiousness, regardless of financial success. Such ethics could seldom fail to stimulate the accumulation of capital and (what was at least equally crucial) its investment in productive equipment rather than in appurtenances of ostentatious consumption and in self-indulgence. It stands to reason that lineages maintaining these attitudes over the generations would be better at building up family firms than people of less austere frame of mind, and more likely to get to the top in economic competition. It would be strange if countries with many persons of this kind would not develop faster along capitalistic lines than countries where they were few. What Max Weber did not, of course, say is that a *medical* factor might have been involved in the causation of this superiority.

In the absence of statistical data we can only surmise—but it seems likely that, given the virulence and incurability of syphilis, a stricter observance of marital fidelity and pre-marital chastity would bestow upon a family, a lineage, a region, a country, or a population demarcated by religion, a considerable advantage in health and in vigour. This factor might have played a part in the more rapid progress of the Protestant countries, as well as in the economic ascendancy of Protestant minorities in Catholic regions or nations. The "medical factor" would thus reinforce the effects of cultural traits.

THE VAST AND EVIDENTLY ENDLESS DEBATE which arose around Max Weber's thesis has given birth to a vast literature which could not be considered here, no matter how summarily, without doubling the length of the present essay. (In any case I have presented my view on the balance of the arguments in an article reprinted as Ch. 13 in *The Uses of Comparative Sociology*.) My conclusion (which I still uphold) was that, provided that we do not think in simplistic terms of single and one-way causation, and admit reciprocal influence, Weber was right in maintaining that puritanism helped the growth of capitalism.

It seems likely—or at least conceivable—that without this stimulus the forces tending to arrest this development might have triumphed. The case of the Low Countries supports this view: until the Reformation the chief centres of business enterprise in Northern Europe were located in what is now Belgian territory, the most prominent being Bruges and Antwerp. Later these centres stagnated or withered under the rule of the Habsburgs and the Catholic Church, while Protestant Holland began to lead the world not only in commerce but in science, technology, and agriculture as well. Cross-Channel learning from the Dutch underlay the commercial and technical advances of England. It seems likely that this chain of developments would have been broken had the Spaniards been able to subdue the Netherlands and extirpate the Dutch Reformed Church.

Neither science and technology nor the other extraordinary traits of Western civilisation could have developed without capitalism. And now it seems that among the circumstances which helped its rise a dark "medical factor"—syphilis—played an important role. Such are the surprising mysteries of social causation in history.

JUDAISM AND THE AMERICAN IDEA

Milton R. Konvitz

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

A Reply to Max Beloff

Of Exile & Double Consciousness

By Milton R. Konvitz

IF MY BOOK, *Judaism and the American Idea,* is read and reviewed—as was done by Professor Max Beloff—from the perspective of the problem of anti-Semitism, then I can see how it may impress the reader as the expression of "the innocent optimism of an American Jew." But I would gently protest that to read the book in such a confined context is to subject it to a procrustean treatment. I had thought that I had made it clear at the very outset that my book was concerned "not with being but with ideals and values"; that it proposed to describe "an ideal America" and "an ideal Judaism"; that it was concerned with "human ideals and rights." It is a book that should be classified as a history of ideas rather than as a sociological treatise. Only in one chapter, "From Jewish Rights to Human Rights", do I touch the question of anti-Semitism, without, however, departing substantially from the chief thrust and spirit.

But Professor Beloff has raised some significant and sharply-focused questions. They touch the problem of "roots" and "Jewish identity" (to use the terms of Prof. Beloff's subtitle). He concludes with the challenging statement:

> "The ambiguity of Jewish existence and the claim to be a people and not just a sect means that anti-Semitism is inherent in its environment—Christian, or Muslim, or Marxist. *Pace* Professor Konvitz, no Bill of Rights can resolve the problem of Jewish identity."

I readily assent to the spirit, though not to the letter, of this statement. Jewish existence is intrinsically ambiguous, but this ambiguity is not necessarily a cause of anti-Semitism. Nor is anti-Semitism the cause of Jewish ambiguity; for even if the Bill of Rights of the US Constitution were fully observed, so that every American—regardless of his race, colour, religion, or national origin—lived peacefully under his own vine and his own fig tree, the problem of Jewish identity would still remain. A Gallup poll (conducted in May 1979) showed that 12% of American Protestants and 13% of Catholics thought that Jews were trying to gain too much power. This was a significant drop from the figures in polls taken in 1952 and 1965. In May 1979 only 2% of Protestants and Catholics said that they ever had an experience that made them dislike Jews. Even if polls and other investigations were to show that there was absolutely no prejudice against Jews and no instances of discrimination against them, there would still remain, I would say, the problem of "Jewish identity" and the "ambiguity" of Jewish existence. Just as the Emancipation and the Enlightenment did not end the Jewish exile, the *galut* of the Jew and of Judaism, even so the establishment of full peace and security for the State of Israel will not end either the exile (*galut*) or the dispersion (*golah*).

For the Jew's destiny is existence in tension: to be, at one and the same time, attached and detached: to be rooted and yet transcendent: to seek harmonisation with his surroundings and yet be the critic and the prophet and to have no resting place. The haunting verse of Henry Vaughan applies peculiarly to Jews: "*God ordered motion, but ordained no rest.*" No one so much as the Jew knows an inner solitude. Emerson in his essay on "Fate" wrote of "double consciousness." But who knows this double consciousness better than the Jew? I can speak of myself as being an American Jew, or as a Jewish American, but in fact I am both an American and a Jew. The two coexist, often in harmony, often in tension. I think of the poignant outcry of John Woolman, the saintly American Quaker: "In my travelling on the road, I often felt a cry rise from the centre of my mind, thus, 'O Lord, I am a stranger on the earth, hide not Thy face from me.'. . ." The Jew is at home and a stranger. He may be busy in the marketplace or office, on the bench or in the legislature, yet at his centre there is a tiny heart of loneliness and solitude. Like Hawthorne's minister who always wears a black veil, the Jew has a private face which he will not

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show the world. Jews live in a world of action but often are not of it. They are attached to it, and yet a part of them belongs elsewhere. In that elsewhere they know each other, they embarrass and hurt each other, they comfort and keep each other, they strive and hope for each other; in that elsewhere they are a people apart.

In that elsewhere they have, with Sir Thomas Browne, "a glimpse of incomprehensibles, and Thoughts of things which Thoughts but tenderly touch"; their heads are lodged with immaterials, and they ascend (or descend) into invisibles. For the Jew, there is no ease in Zion; life is perpetual struggle; existence is actually or potentially precarious; he sees life as constant motion, change, as contention and reconciliation, as damnation and salvation.

What I have said about the American Jew is, perhaps with equal force, true of the Israeli Jew. He is at home in the State of Israel. He is, at the same time, in exile, as is the American Jew, as is every Jew. Homelessness for the Jew does not end with the attainment of freedom and equality, and freedom from prejudice and discrimination—freedom from anti-Semitism—in a free, democratic country; nor does exile end with the attainment of national independence and statehood in Israel. Like Jacob, the Jew is eternally the sojourner. For the Jew, there is no normalcy, not even in the State of Israel. He remains in exile, a sojourner. The Israeli Jew, too, like Jehudah Halevi, can cry out: "My heart is in the East, while I am in the far West."

The Jews have always been wandering Israelites. They wandered before they were banished. They were in the Diaspora before they were in the Exile; the *golah* came before the *galut*. "Our people wandered before they were driven", says Joseph Kalonymos in *Daniel Deronda*; and hundreds of thousands of Israeli Jews, even *sabras* (native-born citizens), choose to be wanderers, to be in exile in America or Europe rather than to be in exile in Israel. "The spirit bloweth where it listeth . . . ." It is no different with the Jews who are fortunate enough to be allowed to leave the USSR: some choose home/exile in Israel, some choose to make their home/exile elsewhere. Why would they not remain in their Russian home/exile? Because Russian totalitarianism demands that the Jews, though identified and marked as Jews, destroy one side of their double consciousness—that they do what is for them an impossibility, namely, think of themselves as being altogether at home and not at all in exile; in other words, though identified and marked—and treated—as Jews, that they cease to know themselves as Jews.

But the Jew, as easily as Kant, and almost by instinct, knows the difference between phenomenon and noumenon, between the world of appearance and the world as it really is—*das Ding an Sich*. This puts him in constant tension between the actual and the possible, between what he sees and what he hopes for. In the *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, Oliver Wendell Holmes says that in every dialogue between John and Thomas, there are at least three Johns and three Thomases: (*1*) the real John, known only to his Maker; (*2*) John as he ideally sees himself, and often very unlike him; and (*3*) John as Thomas sees him, often very unlike the real or the ideal John. (The same analysis can be applied to Thomas.) One could say that every Jew is many men. There is more than double consciousness in his case. (*1*) There is the Jew as only God sees him. Maybe that is the real man, the Platonic Idea of myself. (*2*) Then there is the Jew as I see myself ideally, the man I wish to be, hope to become. (*3*) The Jew I know myself to be phenomenally, with all my foibles, my habits, my failings. (*4*) The self that I try to show to my wife and family and friends, the self that is sharply controlled and moulded to get close to the ideal self I would like to be. (*5*) The Jew that I show myself to be when I am with other Jews. (*6*) The Jew that I try to be when I am with non-Jews. I contain, I am sure, many other selves, a whole universe of selves. And they overlap, and coexist, and are in constant tension among themselves and among the multiple selves of others.

NOW I KNOW THAT much of this is fully applicable to all men, Jews and non-Jews alike, as the reference to Holmes alone would indicate. In the story by Hawthorne, "The Minister's Black Veil", the speaker is a Christian cleric, who speaks, in the following poignant passage, for the human condition:

> "Why do you tremble at me alone? Tremble also at each other! Have men avoided me, and women shown no pity, and children screamed and fled, only for my black veil? What, but the mystery which it obscurely typifies, has made this piece of crepe so awful? When the friend shows his inmost heart to his friend, the lover to his best beloved; when man does not vainly shrink from the eye of his Creator, loathsomely treasuring up the secret of his sin; then deem me a monster, for the symbol beneath which I have lived, and die! I look around me, and lo, every visage a Black Veil!"

But the Jew, the man of multiple consciousness, is destined to cover with his black veil more selves than are given to others. In a sense, every man is in exile; in a sense John Donne was mistaken, every man is an island. But the Jew—American or Israeli or whatever—is the paradigm of the man in exile. The ambiguity of Jewish existence, the problem of Jewish identity, follows him wherever he goes or rests or is driven. He cannot ever be the sailor home from sea, or the hunter home from the hill.

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LANGUAGE

"When I Hear the Word 'Culture'. . ."

From Arnold to Anthropology—By ROGER SANDALL

FOR MORE THAN a hundred years anthropology has been spreading sweetness and light. And now that the results are in—now that even the strangest customs from the remotest deserts and forests have been recognised and accepted as truly human and truly natural—it is plain that the popular verdict on anthropology's first century has been an enthusiastic assent. Its ethical understandings are widely regarded as benign. Its politics have been found as congenial to the liberal imagination as they are to the radical mind. Its broader implications have been received with interest by a wide range of people who have gladly melded its doctrines with their own. And if there is any one thing which explains this widely accepted congeniality and appeal it is the persuasive conception of culture which anthropology has bestowed upon the world.

No other notion has proved so irresistible. It beguiled T. S. Eliot thirty years ago, while the tactical advantages it had to offer (and which Eliot inadvertently advertised) soon drew the attention of Raymond Williams. It made its most explosive literary impact in Sir Charles Snow's declaration that "the scientific culture really is a culture, not only in an intellectual but also in an anthropological sense", and it received its most subtle literary interpretation in Lionel Trilling's essay warning against the excesses of "the cultural mode of thought." It helped to provide a rationale for some of the arguments of Frantz Fanon, while the same cultural relativism which fortified Fanon now encourages Paul Feyerabend to claim that science and witchcraft are more similar than university men had previously dared suppose.[1] It has been reported that for 62 years after its introduction into English in Sir Edward Burnett Tylor's book *Primitive Culture* (1871), and for 40 years after the first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, the anthropological meaning of "culture" was not admitted to the *OED*, and the narrower and consciously exclusive use common in the humanities—the Arnoldian use which Raymond Williams finds "hostile" and "embarrassing" and which he is now pleased to see eclipsed—was much more popular. But all this is truly a thing of the past. There is now no longer any need for anthropologists to feel "humble in estimating the tempo of their influence."

Today the anthropological conception of culture reigns supreme.

The evidence is abundant—as any regular reader of ENCOUNTER knows. Quite aside from the argument presented by C. P. Snow, the distinctively anthropological plural form in the very title of that celebrated piece twenty years ago, *The Two Cultures*, in itself announced a change, and since then both plurals and compounds have multiplied apace. Not long ago in these pages we saw what was once simply described as despotism appearing in a political discussion of *despotic cultures*, a phrasing which more adequately conveyed the enduring incorrigibility the author had in mind.[2] From a different source and a different quarter, blindness and inertia have been proposed as "cultural" features of our political life by Alasdair MacIntyre: there are some things, he said recently, which "our *political culture* cannot allow us to admit."[3] Again, what we had become inured to as a kind of treacherous waywardness endemic in intellectual life, "the alienation of the intelligentsia", now receives, as *adversary culture*, a formulation at once more menacing, more systematic, and more fixed.[4]

[1] Lionel Trilling, "The Leavis-Snow Controversy", in *Beyond Culture* (1966). Frantz Fanon, "Racism and Culture", in *Toward the African Revolution* (1970). Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (1975). In the second of last year's Herbert Spencer Lectures, delivered at the University of Oxford on 2 November 1979, Hilary Putnam of Harvard, alluding to Feyerabend and to T. S. Kuhn, described the relativistic "cultural norms" approach derived ultimately from anthropology as one of the two most influential paradigms in contemporary philosophy of science.

[2] Robert Conquest, "The Role of the Intellectual in International Misunderstanding", ENCOUNTER, August 1978.

[3] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Alasdair MacIntyre claims that new dark ages are impending", *The London Review of Books*, 20 December 1979.

[4] Irving Kristol, "The Adversary Culture of the Intellectuals", ENCOUNTER, October 1979.

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These usages are generally pessimistic in tone and meaning. But the anthropological conception of culture easily lends itself to more happily optimistic interpretations too. *Business culture*, for example, attractively glosses the cash nexus. An editorial in *The Times* for 22 November 1979 concerning the intellectual ambience of the Cambridge Apostles tells us that "theirs was a largely *homosexual culture*, with necessary dependence on ties of friendship", and one feels that in this case the word culture confers a fraternal benevolence and a sense of belonging which the depiction of mere sexual idiosyncrasy would lack. After the Bristol riot of April 1980 a 15-year-old girl offered the explanation that "the police don't understand the way we live. They've got their culture, we've got ours." In this analysis the "two cultures" of the police and the rioters are regarded as if they were on a par. Each is incompatible, irreducible, and is somehow envisaged as having a legitimacy which transcends mere national law. Or to take another example, while the man in the street probably regards drug addiction as just another unfortunate social ill, *drug culture* helps him to see matters in a much more sanguine light. Deserving neither excoriation nor even discouragement, drug culture is something which plainly requires a compassionate infrastructure of institutionalised concern.

ALL OF WHICH should make one thing fairly clear. And this is that what has now passed into public understanding and general use as the anthropological conception of culture is not quite the innocently "descriptive" term which its academic connections might suggest. If in even its most comical associations it can be used to legitimise and redeem (*punk culture*, a gift from sociology, comes to mind); if its ideological "holism" was as attractive to Eliot as it was useful to Raymond Williams; if a phrase like *despotic culture* can make despotism seem rather worse than it did before, and a revolution on behalf of culture can make revolution sound rather better (nobler, more deeply necessary than economic or political necessity itself)[5]; if it directly suggests a normative order which is self-sufficient, and which is proudly upheld by its members in terms of *Mein Kultur* right or wrong—then it's fairly obvious that the anthropological conception of culture in general use is a lively verbal weapon which either blames or praises just as often as it neutrally describes.[6]

YET THIS IS WIDELY denied. In A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn's *Culture*,[7] the most authoritative professional survey of the term culture and its meanings carried out by anthropologists to date, it is implied throughout that whatever else it may be or do or mean (and some 130 possibilities are supplied) a characteristic which distinguishes the anthropological conception is that it is neutral, non-evaluative, and scientific. It is only the humanistic conception which commends, judges, and prescribes. And much the same distinction can be found in the most erudite and authoritative writings in both literature and the fine arts. Directly addressing this question in his *In Search of Cultural History* (1969), Sir Ernst Gombrich notes that

> "the usage of anthropologists exemplified by Burnett Tylor... has spread to social scientists, especially on the other side of the Atlantic. In this *sterilised meaning* it has come into vogue again in such terms as 'working-class culture' or even C. P. Snow's 'two cultures' of unhappy memory. These are *purely descriptive terms*, stripped, it is often claimed, of any so-called 'value judgement'...." (My italics)

[5] "President Bani-Sadr of Iran yesterday proclaimed the start of a Cultural Revolution. He gave notice that he would mobilise the masses against anyone who threatened 'the oneness and unity' of the country after a night of violence between left-wing students and Muslim fundamentalists at Teheran University.... Inside the now heavily guarded university, the President said the meaning of the Cultural Revolution was that he was able to ask the 36 million people of Iran to defend the unity of their country." *The Guardian*, 23 April 1980, p. 6.

[6] A detailed sociological study of some of the matters mentioned here may be found in J. P. Merquior's "Remarks on the Theory of Culture", in his *The Veil and The Mask* (Routledge, 1979).

[7] A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: a Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, Papers, Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. 47, 1952. OED's Kroeber and Kluckhohn's assertion regarding the delayed entry of the anthropological meaning is not strictly true, as one may find in definition number 5 of the entry under *culture* in Vol. 2, Part 2 of *The New English Dictionary* (1893)—later and more familiarly "the OED":

> "5. The training, development, and refinement of mind, tastes, and manners...."

This is appropriately illustrated by Arnold's "the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world", and the other examples all fit the definition. At this point, however, serious trouble begins. Under 5b we have a definition closely related to (5) above for which the examples given are strikingly unsuited, and which are in fact anthropological:

> "5b (with *a* and *pl.*) 1867 Freeman *Norm. Conq.* (1876) I. iv. 150 A language and culture which was wholly alien to them. 1891 *Spectator* 27 June, Speaking all languages, knowing all cultures, living among all races."

It is surely clear that what both Freeman and the author of the piece in the *Spectator* meant had little or nothing to do with the refinement of mind, tastes, and manners, but instead denoted a *social form*. Somewhat surprisingly, this does not appear to have been recognised by those who wrote the original entry in the dictionary.

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One detects a certain hesitation. The deliberate "it is claimed" in the last sentence suggests, perhaps, that Gombrich is not entirely convinced by such arguments—and may even feel somewhat ambivalent about the matter. If this is so, such ambivalence would be fully justified. After all, it is precisely because Snow's use of the anthropological concept was anything but "sterilised", was in fact correctly seen to be a claim on behalf of the Sciences to an equal legitimacy and prestige in the affairs of the nation as a whole, that it provoked such a fiery response from F. R. Leavis. Yet in setting down his opinion that this anthropological meaning of culture is somehow, despite all, *sterilised* and *value-free*, Gombrich is expressing a view which is regularly found in literature and the arts. In the case of Eliot, G. H. Bantock found a continual wavering between descriptive and prescriptive usages.[8] And when, in 1972, Bernard Bergonzi discussed the *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, he identified one of the main sources of confusion in similar terms.[9] The troubles of Eliot's arguments derived from his ambiguous use of two mutually exclusive meanings, the Anthropological-Descriptive and the Arnoldian-Evaluative:

> "In principle, he is concerned with culture in the broad or anthropological sense, rather than the narrow or Arnoldian sense: that is to say, the whole way of life of a society, all its inherited manners, customs, and styles of living; as opposed to 'the best that has been thought and said' and the cultivation of the fine arts. In practice, however, Eliot slides from one sense of culture to another in a quite disconcerting way. The anthropological use of the word is *descriptive and value-free*. . . ." (My italics)

Close inspection of the *Notes* suggests that more than merely this may be involved. Yet a sliding from sense to sense is certainly part of the problem, and in the very passage where T. S. Eliot's commitment to anthropology is most explicit[10] (the second half of the paragraph below, starting at *Now* . . .) there is a perfect example of what Bergonzi has in mind.

> "By 'culture', then, I mean first of all what the anthropologists mean: the way of life of a particular people living together in one place. That culture is made visible in their arts, in their social system, in their habits and customs, in their religion. But these things added together do not constitute the culture, though we often speak for convenience as if they did. These things are simply the parts into which a culture can be anatomised, as a human body can. But just as a man is something more than the assemblage of the various constituent parts of his body, so a culture is more than the assemblage of its arts, customs, and religious beliefs. These things all act upon each other, and fully to understand one you have to understand all. *Now there are of course higher cultures and lower cultures*, and the higher cultures in general are distinguished by differentiation of function, *so that you can speak of the less cultured and the more cultured strata of society*, and finally, you can speak of individuals as being exceptionally cultured. The culture of an artist or a philosopher is distinct from that of a mine worker or field labourer. . . but in a healthy society these are all parts of this same culture; and the artist, the poet, the philosopher, the politician and the labourer will have a culture in common, which they do not share with other people of the same occupations in other countries." (My italics)

Where else have those little words *now* and *so* been used too ambitiously? Yet if one allows for the fact that no modern anthropologist sensitive to his students' expectations (or to their moral stares) would be found speaking of "higher" or "lower" cultures in quite this way, the statement that "the higher cultures in general are distinguished by

[8] G. H. Bantock, *T. S. Eliot and Education* (1970).
[9] Bernard Bergonzi, *T. S. Eliot* (1972), p. 156.
[10] T. S. Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948), p. 124.

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differentiation of function" is an unexceptionable sociological commonplace. Where the real trouble starts is with the *non sequitur* ominously heralded by "so":

> "so that you can speak of the less cultured and the more cultured strata of society, and finally, you can speak of individuals as being exceptionally cultured."

No doubt you *can* speak of such things, but it makes little sense to do so. There is, alas, only a tenuous connection between "what the anthropologists mean" by their descriptive *higher cultures* and what the Arnoldians mean by varying degrees of prescriptive personal *cultivation*. The first is a necessary, but certainly not a sufficient condition, of the second. Indeed, the very suggestion that it could be anything more might have provoked from Ortega y Gasset a rather sinister laugh, for the differentiation which Eliot finds in the "higher cultures" is only specialisation under another name; and such specialisation, Ortega argued long ago, was precisely what made impossible the "exceptional cultivation" of individuals which Eliot admired.[11]

ALL OF WHICH clearly illustrates Eliot's tendency to blur and to blend the descriptive and prescriptive meanings. Yet it is not the second half of the paragraph, where this occurs, which mainly interests Bernard Bergonzi. In his analysis he quotes only the first half, up until the turn of thought signalled by *now*. His chief concern is Eliot's endorsement of "what the anthropologists mean" as it continues through an anatomy of the parts of the social body, down to the suggestion that the chief virtue of a system of art, customs, and religion is that it live and operate as a self-sufficient organic whole.

What exactly is one to make of all this? Bergonzi rightly sees that a crudely binary either/or (*either* Eliot is talking about Anthropological description *or* he is talking about Arnoldian prescription) does little to explain "holistic or organicist" views of this kind. Is there, he wonders, a third and different sense of culture which Eliot has all-too-vaguely in mind?

This seems to be the only conclusion one can draw. In passages like the anatomical one quoted, leading directly to an endorsement of organic social wholes, Bergonzi tells us that Eliot appears to be "attempting to move toward a third sense of culture which will go beyond the other two." Yet because it is "the other two" which must be used to explain this mysterious third sense, and because this is something they are clearly unable to do, it is Eliot who is said to be confused. He is, we are told, "aware of the ambiguity"—i.e., between description and prescription—"though the subtleties and circumlocutions of his prose do little to resolve it." These ambiguities then reach some sort of climax in "an extraordinarily tortured paragraph" on the subject of the unity of culture and religion, "a passage [which] illustrates the frequent tendency in Eliot's prose for meanings to collapse and merge into each other as a result of excessive qualification. . ." and which helps to demonstrate, for Bergonzi, that "Eliot's notion of culture as the incarnation of religion is not wholly intelligible."[12]

One must agree that it isn't intelligible—at least, not in the terms supplied. But if we firmly set aside the either/or of the more neutral usages of science on the one hand, and of Matthew Arnold on the other—if we concentrate instead upon the conception of culture which has come down so little changed from Johann Gottfried von Herder (and was so lucidly expounded by Isaiah Berlin[13])—and if we bear in mind Herder's highly "evaluative" notion that each distinctive culture is to be prized and valued as a self-sufficient totality, a totality embodied in its language, its arts, and its religion, so that "in order to understand one you have to understand all"—then what Eliot is saying presents no difficulty. It may also help to listen to the voices of the mullahs in the Holy City of Qom, whose arguments on behalf of "Islamic culture" serve now to justify theocratic rule—not to mention examples from even further afield.

For instance, if one attends to the contemporary rhetoric of Black Ethnicity in places like Australia, then not only is "the notion of culture as the incarnation of religion" wholly intelligible, but it becomes very hard to distinguish from the notion of culture which has become one of the more persuasive political doctrines in the world today. Strange though it may seem, when the philo-European Eliot writes that "there is an aspect in which we can see a religion as *the whole way of life of a people*, from birth to grave, from morning to night and even in sleep, and that way of life is also its culture", his sentiments would be warmly applauded along Australia's Arnhem Land and Queensland coasts. What is more, the word often used by Aboriginal political leaders in these areas is the English word "culture", and it is used with the political meanings deriving from German Romanticism. It serves to defend the uniqueness of tribal life against the assaults of civilisation: culture is invoked against the mining engineers, the sacredness of rocks and lagoons is asserted against the jaws of the excavators and the bulldozer's steel blades, by a

[11] Not that Eliot failed to notice this problem in other contexts. He gives much attention to it when criticising "the departmentalisation of elites." T. S. Eliot, *Notes . . .*, p. 36.

[12] Bernard Bergonzi, *T. S. Eliot*, pp. 157–59.

[13] Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder* (1976).

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people who have discovered both the terminology and the ideological force of the "cultural mode of thought."

THIS MAY SEEM surprising—but *Kulturgeschichte* is evidently full of surprises. And the juxtaposition of Eliot's thinking with the political language of Aboriginal leaders in Australia today will only seem strange to those who have never noticed a minor but significant element in his thought.

"What the anthropologists mean" by culture often led him to idealise the possibilities of tribal life. This is especially true of *The Idea of a Christian Society*, a book written in 1939 in direct response to what he saw as the totalitarian tribalism then threatening Europe. The answer which he proposed was a kind of Christian primitivism, a "positive culture" which would above all be *unitary*. "The unitary community should be religious-social . . . a state of affairs which is no longer wholly realised except in very primitive tribes indeed." Again,

> "without sentimentalising the life of the savage, we might practise the humility to observe, in some of the societies upon which we look down as primitive and backward, the operation of a social-religious-artistic complex which we should emulate upon a higher plane."

To Eliot, in 1939, the alternatives facing England were dire—totalitarianism; or a pitiful, apathetic decline. And to those repelled by such a prospect he said:

> "one can only assert that the only possibility of control and balance is a religious control and balance; that the only hopeful course for a society which could thrive and continue its creative activity in the arts of civilisation, is to become Christian. That prospect involves, at least, discipline, inconvenience and discomfort: but here as hereafter the alternative to hell is purgatory."[14]

Whether or not Herder himself would have endorsed this final analysis is uncertain. But there can be little doubt that if only the name of the religious faith were changed, few in the Holy City of Qom would disagree.

SUBTLE MINDS may well object to all this. It will be said that several clearly distinguishable things are being hopelessly mixed: that the anthropological *concept* of culture is one thing, and the *term* which expresses it is quite another; that the varying *concrete reference* of the term must also be taken into account, and that whether or not anyone uses the term for this or that *ideological purpose* is an entirely separate matter yet again.[15] To some extent I agree. The term culture is but a clue to the wider subject of the concept itself. Still, it's the best clue we have. And what does seem remarkable is the stability of the concept and its ideological use over the past 200 years, so that what Herder was talking about would be instantly understood by political leaders today (and in some cases would not even need translation) whether they lived in northern Australia or in Teheran.

Others may also object to the suggestion that the ideological mode of culture theory owes anything to anthropology. It is of course true that professional usage is ordinarily neutral. When Clifford Geertz tells us that "the concept of culture I espouse . . . is essentially a semiotic one", there is no reason to think that the attachment to his "spouse" involves more than the conditional loyalty owed to any explanatory scheme. And though it is also true that the minds of a whole generation of Americans who read anthropological popularisations were shaped and kneaded (or Benedict and Meaded) by relativistic theory, it might still be argued that this has nothing to do with culture as faith and doctrine. According to this view the real origin of the ideological use of the term in the West was in another time, another place, and another country.

It was in Germany around the time of World War I that *Kultur* was being loudly promoted as the German alternative to "civilisation"—*Kultur* being warm, populist, and creative, both the prime source of identity and a linguistically unique possession of the chosen *Volk*; civilisation (on which the French and the English seemed to have a hold) being cold, arrogant, and paralysing, a universal misfortune propagated by rootless polyglots.

No doubt there is something to this argument. Yet an inquiry into the ideological use of the term culture—of *culturism*, so to speak—besides leading back to German Romanticism, tends to strengthen rather than weaken the anthropological connection. And it is surprising how shy Kroeber and Kluckhohn were about discussing such matters. Their tone and manner when they dealt with *Kultur und Schrecklichkeit* was itself revealing. It was with an air almost of pained surprise that they found themselves having to admit that in the invectives of the dispute over *Kultur* and civilisation "the word culture had a popular meaning essentially identical to that with which anthropologists use it." What this points to is that the

[14] T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939), pp. 29–30, 62, 23–24.

[15] There is a loose correspondence between these distinctions and those made by Quentin Skinner in his "The Idea of a Cultural Lexicon", *Essays in Criticism*, July 1979.

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"sterilised, purely descriptive" meaning which is so popularly regarded as *the* anthropological sense of the word is in fact a somewhat insecure latecomer. It is a latecomer, moreover, precariously derived from a very powerful and active ideological conception which social science has tried—rather somnambulistically, one feels—to pacify, to neutralise, and to disarm. The success of this manoeuvre is constantly threatened, and the actively ideological potential of the term culture is ever ready to revive, whenever the neutral mode of usage is not stiffened by the professional discipline of anthropology or sustained by the ideal of objectivity. It is arguable whether either of these restraints are today as strong as they were.

As for the sources of culture theory as ideology, and their relevance today, one could hardly do better than quote Alfred G. Meyer's appendix to the Kroeber and Kluckhohn book, "Historical Notes on Ideological Aspects of the Concept of Culture in Germany and Russia." Noting that "for Kant and other representatives of 18th-century enlightenment in Germany, the enlightenment itself, the growth of rationalist and utilitarian philosophy . . . represented *Kultur*" he went on to identify a second, opposing, and eventually dominating view of the matter:

> "The other ideological strand tended to regard *Kultur* as a complex of qualities, achievements, and behaviour patterns which were local or national in origin and significance, unique, non-transferable, non-repetitive, and therefore irrelevant for the outsider. Herder's relativism did much to pave the way for this conception of *Kultur*. The stress on such unique culture patterns as against the economic, political, scientific, or philosophical achievements of Western civilisation can be regarded as an attempt to compensate for a deep-seated feeling of inferiority on the part of German intellectuals once they had come in contact with the advanced nations. Similarly, Russian cultural nationalism can easily be traced to such a feeling of inferiority; quite fittingly, Russian cultural nationalism developed in the measure as Russian contacts with the West intensified. These *Kultur* theories, then, are a typical ideological expression—though by no means the only one—of the rise of backward societies against the encroachments of the West on their traditional culture. *They consist in asserting the reality of something which is just about to be destroyed.*" (Italics in original)

IF CULTURE AS IDEOLOGY is found at its most sympathetic and understandable among Aboriginal political leaders in Australia today, and at its most paradoxical in the speculative proposals of T. S. Eliot, it is found at its least sympathetic and most destructive in Raymond Williams. As anyone who has sampled his prose will concede, it has not always been easy to see what he was driving at. But a new book[16] helpfully makes a number of things more clear. Interrogated under a naked 200-watt ideological light-bulb, he was asked why, in *Keywords* (1976) and in *Marxism and Literature* (1977),

> "the partisan aspect of what you are saying is largely concealed from the reader. . . . You remarked that you have always tried to keep the mainstream of bourgeois culture in your sights—a combativity we very much admire. In *Marxism and Literature* you know whom you are aiming at—but do you tell your readers?"

It's a good question. To which might be added, "and if not, why not?" Certainly these are questions which come forcefully to mind when one looks at the way Williams has used the anthropological conception of culture down through the years. In *Keywords* (p. 82) he has this to say:

> "It is interesting that the steadily extending social and anthropological use of *culture* and

[16] *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review*. By RAYMOND WILLIAMS. Interviews conducted by PERRY ANDERSON, ANTHONY BARNETT and FRANCIS MULHERN. New Left Books, £12.79.

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> *cultural* ... [has] ... either by-passed or effectively diminished the hostility and [the] unease and embarrassment."

The hostility and unease which bother him are aroused by any conception of culture entailing claims to superior knowledge by superior people.

It is indeed "interesting", and one can see why Perry Anderson *et al.* wanted less obliquity, and mildly criticised their author's "impersonally objectivist" stance. When we hear about the anthropological use "steadily extending" we seem to see an irresistible semantic tide; and the uninformed would never imagine that Williams had had anything to do with the tide himself. It could be modesty—yet this decidedly uncandid way of putting things has marked his public relation to the Anthropological conception of Culture from the first. Twenty years ago we find the deliberate extension of meaning presented as a form of historical inevitability, as a force over which we have little control. F. R. Leavis's concept of culture was plainly too narrow. Musing on this, Williams wrote that

> "the difficulty about the idea of culture is that we are continually forced to extend it, until it becomes almost identical with our whole common life."[17]

But this "difficulty" is his—not ours. The effect of the "we" is to compel the complicity of his readers in what is patently an uninvited extension of his own. When this practice of limitlessly pushing the holistic concept of culture as "a whole way of life" was pointed out by Ian Gregor in *Essays in Criticism*—where he drew attention to the oddity of regarding the Trades Union Congress as a form of creative art—Williams was quick to administer a rebuke.[18] But now, in the Interrogation Transcript (p. 155) we find the following:

> "*Q.* What specific advantages did you see in the term culture for socialist theory?
>
> *A.* There are two answers to that. The single most shocking thesis to established liberal opinion in *Culture and Society*, including people who liked the book in other ways, was that I did not define working-class culture as a few proletarian novels ... but as the institutions of the labour movement. *That was the gain of talking about culture as a whole way of life."*

What attracted Williams to the Anthropological conception was its sheer political scope. What could possibly be larger than *a whole way of life*? That's what the anthropologists said the term "culture" really meant, according to Williams. And if this strategic terminological weapon in the class war were to be wrested from those at Cambridge who had misappropriated it for their own effete and exclusive uses, then the extension proposed by social science should be pushed for all it was worth. If T. S. Eliot was going to define culture as eating Wensleydale cheese at Henley to the sound of Elgar, then Raymond Williams was free to add a few amendments of his own: why not "mixed farming, the Stock Exchange, coal-mining, the London Transport"?[19] On anthropological grounds there could be no objection whatever. The Anthropological conception also suggested the possibility of a fruitful political marriage between cultural and historical relativism. As Williams saw it, the educational advantages of "The sense of 'culture' as 'a whole way of life' [which] has been most marked in twentieth-century anthropology and sociology" involved a most satisfactory merging of interests:

> "There have been two main results in ordinary thinking. First, we have learned something new about change: not only that it need not terrify us, since alternative institutions and emphases of energy have been shown to be practicable and satisfying; but also that it cannot be piecemeal—one element of a complex system can hardly be changed without seriously affecting the whole."

Two lessons, both useful for historical relativism, could be learnt from this. One need not bother to defend existing institutions when they are threatened or attacked, because others (unspecified, as always in such prognoses) will prove just as "satisfying." At the same time the holistic conclusion suggests that piecemeal reform is largely a waste of time. *Ergo*, in any programme of social change, the entire institutional complex must go.

TODAY WILLIAMS TELLS US, in *Marxism and Literature*, that not only institutions will have to go. Literature must go too. With a zeal which makes even his most loyal sympathisers blench,[20] the now insatiable desire for "a whole way of

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[17] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (1958, Penguin Books, 1977), p. 229.

[18] Ian Gregor, comments in *Essays in Criticism*, Vol. IX, No. 4, p. 425–430.

[19] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 230.

[20] "This annihilating insight [that some day there will be no literature] is extraordinarily difficult for a literary critic, even a Marxist literary critic, to come to terms with." From a review by John Sutherland of *Marxism and Literature, New Statesman*, 19 August 1977, pp. 248–249. See also Terry Eagleton's similar insights as reported by Bernard Bergonzi:

> "Given a profound enough historical shift there is no reason in principle why Shakespeare should not fall into the ranks of the unemployed."

This is a prospect, as Bergonzi notes, which Mr Eagleton evidently looks forward to with relish. See "Literature and Politics Now", *Critical Quarterly* (Vol. 20, No. 4) p. 53.

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life" purged of the last remnants of exclusiveness, privilege, and superiority has led to the declared belief that literature itself may have to be "cleared away."

In retrospect, what is poignant about this development is that when T. S. Eliot gloomily foresaw an epoch so debased that it would be "possible to say that it will have *no* culture", Williams accused him of sliding away from the Anthropological conception. After all, "no culture", anthropologically speaking, would logically mean no life, no social forms, nothing at all! And this was clearly absurd and unthinkable. But what was yesterday treated as an absurdity in Eliot's social thought is perilously close to what Raymond Williams today proposes as the way ahead. Now far advanced, in *Marxism and Literature*, into what the Official Transcript refers to as his "ultra-left radical" phase, even the Interrogators can be seen drawing back in anxiety and alarm. As they tell him,

> "one theme of the work is a frontal attack on the very idea of literature as such. In effect, you denounce it as an élitist elevation of certain forms of writing to a special status—the 'literary', a category which you say possesses the same kind of reactionary spell today as that of the 'divine' in feudal society .... [You argue that] since all forms of writing are by definition creative, it is reactionary and exclusivist to privilege some as literary, thereby tacitly or explicitly devaluing others .... Doesn't your current position, if it were strictly maintained, lead to a complete relativism in which it becomes effectively impossible to discriminate between different forms of writing or types of work at all?
>
> WILLIAMS: Well, this is difficult. What I would hope will happen is that after the ground has been cleared of the received idea of literature, it will be possible to find certain new concepts which would call for special emphases."[21]

SO THERE IT IS. When the ground has been cleared—the essential cleansing preliminary—certain new concepts (unspecified) will be found. Then we can make a fresh start. First the deluge—after that, we'll see.

What in fact we see, looking at the not inconsiderable range of societies which have been most systematically cleared in our time, is that when everything imaginable has been incorporated into the apparatus of the state, literature remains one of the only sources of independent opinions and ideas. Passed from hand to hand, often copied

[21] Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters*, p. 325.

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and circulated under the most trying conditions, steadfastly opposed to the single way of seeing required by the cultural mode of thought, it fulfils the critical destiny which the Arnoldian conception of culture once prescribed.

BUT THESE self-destructive literary manoeuvres are only a side issue. It is in a larger context than this that the ideologised conception of culture belongs. When the legitimacy of institutionalised authority is everywhere in question, the prospect of a social order depending largely on a "shared sense of identity" bestowed by a common culture has strong appeal. Since it assumes that social harmony arises fundamentally from like-mindedness, it projects a vision of corporate life magically freed from the arrogance of power, the insolence of office, and the perplexities of legislation and revenue.

Externally, it legitimates extra-territorial yearnings. Thus Mr Bani-Sadr, now President of Iran, could argue (against the Soviet view that mere "minorities" are involved) that Turks, Arabs, and Baluchis "have been living a common life for centuries and have a common culture" (*Guardian*, 18 January 1980). Internally, it legitimates secession. From the "counter-culture" (on the one hand) to the Basques (on the other), it rejects the claims of the state. Its libertarian rhetoric is attractive, since in contrast to the ideal of individual liberty, the claims of cultures cannot so easily be reduced to personal selfishness.

It may be that the doctrine of "My Culture, right or wrong" is to the morality of collective action what the doctrine of "Authenticity" tried to be in the morality of the private life—an ultimate legitimation turned to when the institutionalised sources of authority have lost their power to persuade.

August

And afterwards, shall I remember it—
the wettest of them all, the August
when the hay already scant and poor
lay limp and rotting in the fields?
Or will it merge into the rest:
ten years of Augusts distinguished only
by the heights of children in the photographs?

Already I've forgotten when we came
or when we're going. The days
are like the fungi on the chart I bought
to separate the poisonous ones from those
we could safely eat—so similarly shaped
I cannot tell them positively apart.

They are defined by wooden shutters:
a narrow slit of light that spreads
along their edge to signal morning;
the soft yellow squares of other
still unshuttered windows, seeming close
but shining across a mile of dark
before we close them for the night.

Only their colour changes: from green
to misty white. We have nothing to do
but stand and watch them passing:
the sheep grazing like shifting stones,
the shadows of the clouds feeling their way
across the land like blind men's hands.

Vicki Feaver

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LETTERS

Defending US Sovietologists

IT HAS BEEN my sad duty, as an American "Sovietologist", to read and edit hundreds of articles on the USSR and to suffer through numerous insipid lectures by practitioners of my craft (at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies and at the George Washington University, among other places); but judging from M. Besançon's article in your June issue ["East of Eden"] I have clearly been spared the worst.

The examples of imbecility, ignorance, and meretricious nonsense culled from his notes make one's flesh creep. No less than "an expert on SALT" thinks that "the Russians are less dishonest than we are." An eminent scholar pleads for an "understanding with the new Soviet class", which he describes in unabashedly roseate terms. A "political scientist from Harvard", patently a bloody fool if there ever was one, tells his audience at a Washington seminar that the Soviet leadership is "elderly and [is] therefore bound to be replaced by younger men." Another representative from academia refuses even to consider the possibility that collective farms have anything to do with the sad state of Soviet agriculture. Then there is the "leading diplomatic light in the previous administration" whose thinking (according to M. Besançon, a man not given to diplomatic niceties) is "non-existent", and a Soviet émigré, "who sounded like the most obvious KGB plant"—a "suspicion" reinforced in M. Besançon's mind by information imparted to him by "a gentleman from the CIA" (perhaps also a KGB plant—who can be certain these days?). . . .

"Communism", says M. Besançon, "is only knowable through direct experience." He may have something there. Still, since most of us have not had his valuable experience of active Communist Party membership, we must surely be all the more vigilant about the purveyors of cant and disinformation in our midst. I must therefore urge M. Besançon to stop being coy and name names. He owes it to his colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic, to the cause of Western defence against the USSR, and, indeed, to the readers of his article. I say it not only because it is essential that this information be placed in the public domain, and not only because by cloaking his targets in anonymity M. Besançon may well open himself to charges of engaging in unsavoury polemical practices, but also because some of his statements about people he does choose to identify strike me as—well, rather questionable. For instance, never have I heard Loren Graham assert that Bolshevism is "*just* another culture" (my emphasis)—would M. Besançon kindly provide the reference? I have read Stephen Cohen's book about Bukharin and I—like many others—take issue with some of the author's views; but I fail to see the basis for M. Besançon's sweeping claim that it "applauded Bukharin's career." As for David Granick, it would be interesting to know precisely *which* of his comparisons between American business enterprises and the management of Soviet state enterprises M. Besançon found so outrageous.

To repeat then, what we need is facts, quotations firmly embedded in their context, identifications—and not the tantalisingly vague "extracts" from his American diary offered us by M. Besançon. In particular, I trust he will oblige us with the name of that "most obvious KGB plant."

ABRAHAM BRUMBERG

Washington Center of
Foreign Policy Research

IN TWO YEARS of study and pleasure in the United States, and in particular in the month I spent at the Kennan Institute in April 1979, I never came across the kind of polemic or the very special tone adopted in Mr Brumberg's letter.

Mr Brumberg has not felt called upon to exert himself to understand what I was trying to show or suggest, although my line of argument did not appear so incomprehensible to any of my American teachers (Marc Raeff, Martin Malia, Richard Pipes). On the other hand he attacks me about quotations whose authors I am accused of failing to name. I confirm that I certainly did hear the remarks I quoted, which are taken from my own first-hand notes; but I do not suppose that these quotations fully express their authors' thinking, nor do I believe that they characterise those authors as persons. What they characterise is a state of mind which unfortunately is widespread all over the Western world: *une vulgate anonyme*, a tacit authorised version. I maintain that when Mr Granick compares Soviet factories with American enterprises, there could be no more misleading comparison; and that when Mr Jerry Hough categorises Mr Brezhnev as a "liberal", the adjective is not exactly well chosen. I persist in thinking that Bukharin was a Bolshevik whose policy offered no serious alternative to Stalin's, despite my respect for Professor Stephen Cohen's scholarly study. As for the man I suspect of having links with the KGB, if my suspicions are correct then this gentleman is all the more likely to allege libel; and I shall, therefore, keep my doubts to myself, and to the others who harbour them.

Finally, and at the risk of providing Mr Brumberg with further proof of my Sovietological ignorance, I must confess to never having read a line of his, i.e. before receiving a copy of his remarkable letter.

ALAIN BESANÇON

Paris

African Women

IN THE JUNE ENCOUNTER, Professor Peter Bauer suggests in his critique of Professor Ali Mazrui's Reith Lectures that "the cultivation of cash crops *greatly raised African incomes*."

The increased income does not go to the family unit but results in a higher cash flow to the men. African women, on the other hand, who spend their time providing a basic subsistence crop, often find their economic position worsened. A World Bank study, *"Recognising the 'Invisible' Woman in Development: The World Bank's Experience"*, found that

> "with the expansion of agricultural production, cash crops are encroaching on subsistence lands, often displacing women's crop on to more distant, less fertile land, sometimes in two or more parcels. . . ."

A rice project in Cameroon found that although women made a significant contribution to increased production,

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men retained the proceeds from the sale of rice. In a study on smallholder planting in Ivory Coast, it was indicated, on the basis of past experience, that

> "the marketable surplus of food and hence the income from it—which is usually retained by the women—is likely to decrease. The proceeds from the sale of the rubber are likely to be retained by the men. . . ."

Greater distance to plots used for subsistence farming means that not only women with families to feed were affected, but that their daughters, too, are needed to maintain food supplies. This suggests that female children would not receive the same opportunities for education, or other training, limited as they may be.

While it may be difficult to put a cash value on the loss of real income for female members of the family, there is no doubt that the true cost of cash crop production is greatly underestimated.

JUDITH L. V. KLEIN

University of Maryland
College Park, Md.

THE PRODUCTION of cash crops has greatly raised the incomes and living standards of Africans. If this were not so they would not have cultivated these crops, or would have soon abandoned them and reverted to subsistence cultivation. This simple general point is confirmed by ample evidence, such as the large-scale expansion in the import or local production of mass consumer goods, the great increase in government revenues, and the spectacular decline in mortality.

The distribution of the material benefits within the family is a different issue, which was not discussed by either Professor Mazrui or myself. But as the mortality of women and children has fallen greatly in the wake of the cultivation of cash crops in Africa, and as many of the consumer goods are used by women, it is safe to say that they too have benefited greatly from the emergence of cash crops.

P. T. BAUER

London School
of Economics

Kaufmann's "Martin Buber"

WALTER KAUFMANN'S assessment of Martin Buber's triumphs and failures in ENCOUNTER (May 1979) is a *tour de force* executed in the grand manner, which sets Buber in the context of some of the most important philosophers, poets, and psychoanalysts of the 19th and 20th centuries. For all its erudition, there is very little solid coming-to-terms with Buber himself and its central theses are shockingly wide of the mark. The heart of Kaufmann's article is the assertion that Buber's claim as a philosopher stands and falls on *I and Thou*, and that *I and Thou* is "seriously flawed" in its style, in its authenticity, and, above all, in the Manichean dualism it postulates between the I-Thou and the I-It relations.

Kaufmann's critique of the style of *I and Thou* is curious, considering that he wrote a 40-page prologue for his translation of *I and Thou* in a pseudo-*I and Thou* style and format! More serious, it is totally misleading in the impression it gives that *I and Thou* was not revised by Buber at the time; for Buber went over it critically many times before publishing it. Kaufmann to the contrary notwithstanding, *I and Thou* is not a book of the "easy word" but of the "hard word." The road from the easy word to the hard one was for Buber a road from "speaking beautifully" to rejecting any expression not fully mastered by intention and devotion to the word.

"There is a Manichean strain in *I and Thou* that is unworthy of Buber", writes Kaufmann, "and he himself might have eliminated it if he had been more severe with the child of his inspiration."

It was precisely the attack on Manichean dualism that lies at the heart of *I and Thou* as of all Buber's mature writings. The whole of *I and Thou* is concerned with bringing ever-greater realms of the It into the world of the Thou so that the latter wins "a shining streaming constancy."

Buber did not mean (as Kaufmann assumes) that when I think about a person nothing of the Thou remains—only that in so far as the beloved is talked *about*, I *must* put her or him into categories (such as height, colour of hair, and sex). These very details, so far from being an obstacle to the Thou, are taken up in their particularity and concreteness when I turn back to my friend or beloved as a person.

When I once pointed out to Kaufmann (after his lecture at the Buber Centennial in Israel) that Buber saw his life-work precisely as the attack on the Manicheanism prevalent in our time, Kaufmann responded, "I wanted to say that there must be something wrong with a man like that. . . ." This *non sequitur* hinted at a personal background without which we might well be totally baffled by such a gross misunderstanding of the heart of *I and Thou* by its official translator. In November 1958 Kaufmann sent Buber a long letter in which he expressed his disappointment in Buber's earlier letter in response to Kaufmann's *Critique of Religion and Philosophy*.

> "How many persons are there in my generation whom a few words from you about what they are trying to do and doing could help so much as me? When I ask you questions 'on the knees of my heart' and you reply that you lack time to answer, how can I see it as anything else than a rejection?" (my translation from the German in *Buber Briefwechsel* III, 405).

As Buber's son Rafael himself told me, Kaufmann's whole ambivalent attitude toward Buber from then on stems from this disappointment.

By naming *I and Thou* as a cornerstone of Buber's philosophy and attacking it, Kaufmann wishes to dismiss the significance of Buber's philosophy of dialogue as a whole, reserving his praise for Buber's translation of the Bible and his telling of Hasidic tales. But a true assessment of the significance of Buber's philosophy is not possible unless *I and Thou* is taken together with all the

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books that in one way or another stem from it: *Between Man and Man, Good and Evil, Eclipse of God, The Knowledge of Man*, and much of *Pointing the Way* and *A Believing Humanism: Gleanings*. This whole series represents Buber's developing philosophical anthropology, his understanding of the totality and uniqueness of the human, as it also represents Buber's application of his philosophy of dialogue to theory of knowledge, psychology, education, ethics, aesthetics, social philosophy and the philosophy of religion.

Buber's teaching of "personal making present" "inclusion" and "confirmation" is of the greatest importance for his philosophy of dialogue in general and for its application to family life, education, and psychotherapy in particular. Yet it is only in *Between Man and Man* and *The Knowledge of Man*, not in *I and Thou*, that it is developed. *The Knowledge of Man* stands, indeed, as the culmination and crown of Buber's theory of knowledge, his philosophical anthropology, and his ontology. Along with his misunderstanding of the dialectic between I-Thou and I-It, Walter Kaufmann's serious mismeeting with Martin Buber is his failure to bring Buber's philosophical anthropology into his assessment of Buber as a philosopher.

MAURICE FRIEDMAN

Department of Philosophy
San Diego State University
California

MAURICE FRIEDMAN'S LETTER is ill designed to teach us anything about dialogue. It is an example of psychohistory at its worst.

(*1*) He reads carelessly but claims to fathom my wishes:

> "Kaufmann wishes to dismiss the significance of Buber's philosophy of dialogue as a whole, reserving his praise for Buber's translation of the Bible and his telling of Hasidic tales."

In fact, I did not praise his translation and I have no wish whatsoever to dismiss his ideas about dialogue. It is precisely his notion of dialogue that keeps haunting me, although I am dissatisfied with the way Buber worked it out philosophically. He tended to rely far too much on intense feeling while disparaging reason, and he often failed to note how this invited illusions rather than genuine dialogue. The examples he gives of I-You relationships, not only in *I and Thou* but also in his later works, illustrate this danger: Buber's relation to a tree or to a person glimpsed across a room, without the exchange of a single word. His very short Hasidic tales are masterpieces to my mind but also illustrate the same danger: the genuine You of the Hasidic masters is not recognised and Buber does not enter into a genuine dialogue with them. He relies so much on his own intense feelings that the resulting portrait of Hasidism is extremely subjective. People like those he creates in his wonderful stories never existed.

It is Buber's *theory* of translation, worked out in dialogue with Franz Rosenzweig, that merits the highest praise and seems much more important to me than either their translation of the Bible or Rosenzweig's translations of Judah Halevi. Here I find an unequivocal insistence on the imperative that the translator must listen to the distinctive voice of someone else and make himself the mouthpiece of the You, allowing the author to address readers who have no other way of hearing him.

Professor Friedman and others may find this small praise, and he, like many other translators, has never learned this lesson. Yet translation is merely one form of reading and interpretation, and what Buber said about translation carries over into these fields and indeed into our relation to other human beings. It is for this reason that I have included Buber among the nine major figures with whom I deal at length in my trilogy, *Discovering the Mind* (1980). I realise that my lecture, printed in ENCOUNTER, was anything but the last word on the subject; and since I delivered it I have done a lot more work on these questions, trying to get things clearer.

(*2*) Friedman's "translation from the German" of a snippet from one of my published letters to Buber is shockingly inaccurate.

(*3*) To discover the reasons for my alleged wish to dismiss what in fact I am not dismissing, Friedman relies on his recollection of two conversations, one with me, the other with Rafael Buber. The remark he ascribes to me I do not recall, and in any case it remains totally unclear what it could have meant in context. What I do recall is that after hearing the second version of my lecture in New York in February 1978, Friedman told me that this time he liked it *even* better than in Israel the month before. What Rafael Buber may have said to Friedman about me, I do not know; but he was in no position to know much about my attitude toward Martin Buber before 1969. Rafael and I had never met before he came to Princeton in 1969 to ask me to make a new translation of *I and Thou*. I told him, as I had also told Martin Buber long before November 1958, that I had mixed feelings about *I and Thou*. I also suggested that he ask Maurice Friedman to translate the book. But I shall not descend to the level of reporting what Rafael Buber said to me about Friedman.

While I regret the uncharacteristic *ad hominem* character of Friedman's letter, I am grateful for the opportunity he has given me to clear up some misunderstandings.

ONE FINAL REMARK. My so-called "ambivalent attitude toward Buber" does not spring from any disappointment. Unlike Friedman, I am obviously not a disciple, and in her long introduction to the first volume of her edition of Buber's *Briefwechsel*, Grete Schaeder has analysed my relationship to Buber at length with really extraordinary sensitivity. Is my attitude toward Nietzsche or Hegel "ambivalent" and in need of psychological explanations? Many scholars will surely agree with me that it is possible to admire a philosopher in many ways while at the same time disagreeing with him on very important matters. And I have learned from Nietzsche rather than Buber that precisely this stance facilitates genuine dialogue.

WALTER KAUFMANN

Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

Yalta

READERS of Nikolai Tolstoy's arresting article on the Victims of Yalta in the June issue of ENCOUNTER will be interested to know that conditional planning permission has been granted for a memorial fountain to be put up in

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London, opposite the main entrance to the Victoria & Albert Museum. It will fittingly commemorate the innocent victims of the British and American policy of repatriation between 1944 and 1947.

Eighty per cent of the sum needed to install and maintain the fountain has already been received, and the subscribers include many former members of the armed forces who are unable to forget their horror at having to obey their orders to implement the policy. They also include a number of retired members of the Foreign Office, some of them of the highest rank. But far the greatest number of donations has been received from ordinary individuals who wish to atone in some way for what one of them has described as the "biggest blot on our history since the slave trade." It is hoped that other readers of ENCOUNTER will wish to follow this generous example, and contributions will be gratefully received by the Yalta Victims Memorial Appeal, c/o Chandos Branch, Coutts & Co., 440 Strand, London WC2R 0QS.

JOHN JOLLIFFE

Hon. Sec. and Treasurer
Yalta Victims Memorial Appeal
London

"Holocaust"

ASSUMING John Bennett's specious letter [ENCOUNTER, July] to be statistically correct, would he please tell us why Jews were placed in the death-camps in the first place?

I. M. LIBRACH

Chadwell Heath Hospital
Romford, Essex

AUTHORS

Liu Xinwu, born in 1942 in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, has spent most of his life in Peking. He graduated from teachers' college in 1961 and after ten years as a middle school teacher is now an editor in the Peking Publishing House. His articles and stories appeared in various magazines and journals, but the publication of his story "Class Counsellor" in November 1977 was seen as the forerunner of a new literature in which the tragedies of a socialist society and the problems of adjusting to life and society in the period after the Cultural Revolution could be openly discussed.

Ronald Hingley is Lecturer in Russian at Oxford University, and a Fellow of St Antony's College. His many publications include translations of Chekhov's short stories and plays, a study of *Russian Writers and Society*; Vol. 1, 1825–1904; Vol. 2, 1917–1978 (Weidenfeld, 1967, 1979), biographies of *Joseph Stalin* (Hutchinson, 1974) and *Dostoevsky* (Elek, 1978), and an investigation into *The Russian Mind* (Bodley Head, 1978).

François Bondy is an editor of the monthly *Schweizer Monatshefte* and of *Die Weltwoche* (Zurich).

Roman Karst is a Polish literary critic, at present teaching European Literature at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

David Pannick is a practising barrister and a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

Peter Redgrove's latest publication is a novel, *The Beekeepers*, published this summer by Routledge.

Charles Barr is a Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of East Anglia. His study of Ealing Studios has been re-issued this summer in paperback, and he is currently writing a book on the British films of Alfred Hitchcock.

Ronald Hayman's biography of Nietszche was published earlier this year by Weidenfeld. He is now working on a biography of Franz Kafka.

Douglas Dunn's latest book of poems is *Barbarians* (Faber, 1979).

David Pryce-Jones is the author of a biography of Unity Mitford (1976). His latest novel, *Shirley's Guild*, was published last year by Weidenfeld.

Gerda Cohen, writer and journalist, has contributed for many years to the *New Statesman* and *The Guardian*. She is the author of *What's Wrong with Hospitals?* (Penguin), and numerous pieces of investigative journalism. Names and places in her ENCOUNTER article have been altered to prevent identification.

Michael Grant's many books on the ancient world include *The Ancient Mediterranean* and *Julius Caesar* (1969), *Herod the Great* (1971), *Jews in the Roman World* (1973), *Erotic Art in Pompeii* (1975), *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1976), and *History of Rome* (1978). His study, *The Etruscans*, has just been published by Weidenfeld.

Stanislav Andreski is Professor of Sociology at the University of Reading. His books include *The Social Sciences as Sorcery* (André Deutsch, 1972) and *Reflections on Inequality* (Croom Helm, 1975).

Roger Sandall is Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Sydney. His previous articles in ENCOUNTER include "On the Way to the Pig Festival" (August 1978) and "A Curious Case of Censorship" (July 1976).

WE REGRET that in **Peter Bauer's** letter in the August–September issue an error occurred in a quotation from the *Financial Times*. The figure for the number of people regrouped into ujamaa villages in Tanzania should read "13 million", not 30.

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Life & Letters Today

London

INTERPRETING: **There was another sickening performance by President Giscard d'Estaing of France last week. Not content with coming here and addressing us in reasonable English he and Helmut Schmidt conversed in Germany in English, as they always do; it is the language they share in common.**

The only English public person who speaks decent French is the Queen.

We do have an excellent interpreter's school at Bristol, but they always test all recruits at Geneva again. It's not a field where mistakes can be lightly forgiven.

Perhaps the most horrendous of modern times was to translate Khrushchev's Russian into the blood-curdling headline: "We will bury you." What Khrushchev actually intended was that communism, being a superior system to capitalism, would outlive it, and attend its obsequies. We can do without howlers like that. Into that language lab, everybody.

SUNDAY TIMES

Toronto

CANADIAN ENGLISH: *No one doubted the intelligence, energy or administrative competence of Joe Clark who briefly took over the tricky reins of Canadian Government. But like other notable North Americans before him—President Eisenhower for instance—he often has an awkward way with English.*

"We can beat the Liberals even with one engine tied behind our back", he boasted during the campaign. He told a persistent television interrogator: "I don't want to be wrongly nuanced." He later asked a miner in British Columbia: "What is your total productability here?"

But his Western sense of humour and self-deprecating wit has usually got him out of awkward phrase or situation. When his campaign aeroplane almost crashed on Prince Edward Island, he told the often critical journalists travelling with him: "If anything had happened, this would be the one time in the campaign you would be with me."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Moscow

WHISTLING LOBSTER: *Americans skeptical of hometown officiating at the Olympic Games might say that the Soviet hosts have tried to pull the wool over the foreigners' eyes. The Russians have a phrase for it too. Were they to plead guilty, they would say they had* **"hung noodles from the visitors' ears."**

But, of course, the Russians deny any such shenanigans. They claim the charges are as phony as a $3 bill. Or, as a Russian would put it, **"That's nonsense boiled in vegetable oil."**

For almost every colorful U.S. phrase or idiom, there is a Russian equivalent, according to Sergei Sergeyev—a professor of English at Moscow State University who is writing a book about English idioms and their Russian counterparts.

Sergeyev, who is working as a translator at the television center during the Olympics, became a favorite of visiting US journalists during last summer's Soviet sports festival, Spartakiad, because he was able to translate Russian sport idioms into US vernacular and vice versa.

When somebody referred to a lumbering basketball player as being like a bull in a china shop, Sergeyev pointed out that a Russian would say he was "like a hippopotamus in the living room."

In the Soviet Union, a tie is called a "dry score", and to break a tie is referred to as "moistening the score"—as in, "The Italian calmly sank two free throws, moistening a 66-66 dry score."

On a more somber note, there was the case of the Soviet fencer—happily now recovering—who got run through with a broken foil and could have died. An American would say that he nearly kicked the bucket. A Russian would say he "nearly threw his shoes off."

Sergeyev would be happy to play these idiomatic games until hell freezes over or the cows come home, whichever happens first. Or, as the Russians would put it, **"Until the lobster whistles on the hill."**

WASHINGTON POST

London

MISPRINTS *are often so inspired [Godfrey Smith writes].*

The most celebrated has to be in Thomas Nashe's enchanted "Brightness falls from the air/Queens have died young and fair / Dust hath closed Helen's eye", where we are now pretty certain that Nashe actually wrote the comparatively owlish line: "Brightness falls from the hair." Similarly Herman Melville in "White Jacket", the seafaring novel he wrote just before "Moby Dick", is made to speak of "some inert soiled fish of the sea." It is a most evocative image—but Melville actually wrote coiled fish. Again, Auden tells us that "ports have names for the sea." It is a lovely, beguiling, complex idea; much better than "poets have names for the sea", which is what he wrote. Auden was so taken with the misprint that he allowed it to stand.

Misprints also make splendid job opportunities for generations of PhD students yet unborn. They will have to do well to better Lewis Theobald, the Shakespearean scholar who first saw that "A table of green fields" in Falstaff's death scene made much better sense as "A' babbled of green fields."

THE OBSERVER

New York City

WORDLESS: **Cab Calloway still sings his greatest hit, "Minnie the Moocher", with the trademark phrase he invented one night in the Cotton Club when he forgot the words: "Hi-de-ho."**

That's what he would like to be remembered for, he says.

"Hi-de-ho", he sings. "Hi-de-hi-de-ho."

It's a strange epitaph.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

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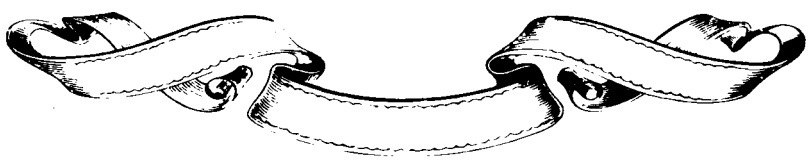

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